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SPEAIGHT.

LADY OXMANTOWN AND HER SON.

157, New Bond Street, W.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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SHORTHORN CATTLE.

WE in this country have been noted for many hundreds of years now as great breeders of live-stock, some of which at least is essentially English in character. No other country, for example, possesses a breed of cattle at all analogous to our Shorthorns, without which the famous homes and parks of England would lose something of their characteristic beauty. A herd of these fine and large animals feeding in the park before a typical mansion of the English landed gentry appears to be something precisely in its right place, and the breed has been formed by the efforts of a succession of generations. In the new history of it which has just been published by Messrs. Vinton, the very competent and learned editor, following the example of the ancient historians—who began the chronicles of every small State with a record of the fall of Troy—deals with the origin of the breed in *Bos Urus* and *Bos Longifrons*; but the modern interest begins with the enterprising men of the eighteenth century, who took in hand the general improvement of agriculture. In looking over the portraits of noted breeders which have been gathered for the adornment of the book, we are struck by the very typical appearance of those men with whose names the development of the Shorthorns is most closely associated. They seem to have walked out of some eighteenth century novel. Thomas Booth and John Maynard, Thomas Bates and the rest look exactly the sort of men in whom Henry Fielding would have delighted when, in the height of his prosperity, he was assimilating that knowledge of English country life which afterwards bore splendid fruit in his famous novels. And those men who began to improve the breed seem, in most cases, to have taken up their task as a labour of love. In the olden times the Shorthorn found its natural home in the eastern portions of the counties of York, Northumberland, Durham and Lincoln. William Ellis, writing in 1744, refers to a race of cattle—which he calls the "Holderness" breed—that resembled in all essential points the Shorthorn as we know it to-day. Then there is an old tradition that Sir Hugh Smithson, who married the heiress of the Percy estates in Northumberland, and was created Duke of Northumberland in 1763, possessed a breed of cattle which in reality were Shorthorns. He was nicknamed, it may be remembered, the "Yorkshire Grazier." But, of course, it was Thomas Bates who took the most prominent part in forming the breed as we know it. In those days the cattle were

frequently called "Durhams" or "Teeswaters," and it is rather curious that in the North of Scotland, where they are in such large request, it is quite common for them even now to be called Teeswaters, just as all cows from the Channel Islands are called Alderneys. Another great agriculturist whose name was closely associated with the development of these cattle was George Culley, who, with his brother Matthew, formed a magnificent herd at Fenton in the north of Northumberland. He was a famous man in other branches of agriculture, and it is related of him that he removed much of the broom that made the whole country in his time a sea of yellow, and which was no doubt very beautiful to look at, but of very little use to those who were engaged in the production of food. Culley was very friendly with Thomas Bakewell, whose name is at least as famous as that of any other man in the history of Shorthorn development. So it was possible to trace the development of the breed from herd to herd until at length we come to Mr. Thomas Booth, whose exertions fixed the breed for many years to come. He was a wonderful judge of beasts himself, and he had two sons, John and Richard, who inherited his capacity, and later on transmitted it to their own children. The Booth type was adhered to so closely by the early breeders that it eventually led to inbreeding, accompanied by a shrinkage in the size, and perhaps some weakening in the constitution, of the animals. A remedy was ultimately found in the importation of new stock from Scotland.

Not the least interesting feature of the book before us is the history it gives of the individual breeders, whose name is almost legion. We find among them representatives of the oldest families in England and also of the youngest. Special attention is given to the Scotch breeders whose herds have exercised so much influence in recent years. Shorthorn-breeding, then, was commenced towards the close of the eighteenth century by Mr. William Robertson of Ladykirk and General Simson of Pitcorrie in Fife. Mr. Robertson was very fond of stock of every description, and the immense stables which he built at Ladykirk still attest his favourite pursuits. In the record of the establishment of this herd, it is curious to note that for the twenty-five cows which he bought from Messrs. Collings and Charge in the years 1789, 1790 and 1791, the prices paid varied from 20 guineas to 50 guineas; but the value put upon Shorthorns was even then increasing rapidly, so that a few years afterwards Charles Collings sold a heifer to General Simpson for 300 guineas, and at the Ketton sale a single bull brought 1,000 guineas. These prices, of course, were far exceeded afterwards, but they are interesting as marking the beginning of the great and rapid advance made by cattle. Mr. Robertson himself did not try to make money out of his hobby. We are told that he frequently sold animals at a very low price, and allowed the use of his best bulls at moderate fees. He made no charge at all to his tenants for the use of his bulls; but those who knew him in other connections will recognise this to be a part of his character.

Perhaps the most famous centre of Shorthorns in Scotland was Sittyton, a farm lying some twelve miles north-west of Aberdeen. This was the home of Amos Cruikshank, "the herdsman of Aberdeenshire," who died at a ripe old age on May 27th, 1895. He had a genius for cattle-breeding, and the name of Sittyton is known now wherever the breed is kept. It would be interesting to go into the families which he either founded or adopted—the Venuses, Verdants, Clippers, Victorias, Secrets, Duchesses of Gloucester, Crocuses, Spicys, Lavenders and so forth. This is full of interest to the breeder and the expert. It would be out of place here to go into these particulars, as it would also to argue out the merits of the Shorthorn as a double-purpose cow in contrast to those which are kept solely for milk. It is good to know that never were there more flourishing herds in Great Britain than there are at the present moment, never such a flourishing trade with the Colonies and foreign countries. Recent exhibitions have been good enough to compare with any of the past, and the prices realised at the sales during the last few years have been as high as ever they were in the history of the Shorthorn. The breed, therefore, was thoroughly deserving of Mr. Sinclair's labours, and we can congratulate him on having given us so satisfactory a book about it.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Oxmantown with her son. Lady Oxmantown is a daughter of Mr. C. E. Lister-Kaye, and her marriage to Lord Oxmantown, the eldest son of the Earl of Rosse, took place in 1905.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem it the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.

COUNTRY



NOTES.

AS was to be expected, the publication of Lord Cromer's book on Egypt (a review of which will be found in another part of the paper) has stirred up a deep controversy, in the midst of which many may be led to forget the singularly fine spectacle afforded by this great statesman, who, on retiring from a post in which he was frequently assailed, produces a book that might have come from the most unbiassed judge on the English Bench, so fair is it in its spirit, so free from party or personal bias. We notice that some of the newspapers talk as though Lord Cromer had sat down to compose this book after his demission of office; but, as a matter of fact, its inception was much older. He tells us in a pathetic passage that he was unable to return to Egypt in September of 1898, and the news of Omdurman was conveyed to him in a telegram which "the Queen, with her usual thoughtfulness for others, sent to a remote shooting-lodge in the North of Scotland where I was watching the last moments of her who inspired me to write this book." This shows that the book had been long premeditated, and probably a great deal of it written a considerable time before its appearance.

One cannot help thinking it a great pity that some newspapers should have concentrated all their attention on the passages relating to General Gordon. As a matter of fact, the generosity of Lord Cromer's appreciation of Gordon is little short of a *tour-de-force*, as it is obvious that the temperament of the one man was the exact opposite of that of the other. And we have to remember that the final results came out well, in spite of the stumbling by the way. Probably Gordon himself, who was, after all, a great and daring soldier, would have desired no better death than that which he encountered at the hands of the savage tribesmen of the desert. He faced them, according to the account which Lord Cromer considers to be authentic, with a disdainful smile, holding in one hand the hilt of a sword which he did not draw, and in the other a loaded revolver which he did not discharge. Lord Cromer leaves us in no doubt of Gordon's resolution not to be made a prisoner of the Mahdi.

Everybody at the moment is interested in the Licensing Bill which Mr. Asquith so ably introduced the other day, and although it belongs to a class of subject that is not very suitable for the columns of a paper which appeals to all sorts and conditions of men, and avoids an expression of strong views on political subjects, there are one or two side aspects of the Bill which cannot fail to interest our readers. Some of them may perhaps have read the speech delivered by General Raitt, C.B., at a public meeting at Windsor. He had occasion to speak of the habits of the Guards, and he said that the drinking officer of other days is now almost extinct, and in the Guards mess at Windsor water and mineral waters have taken the place of wine. He added that "the majority of officers at the Guards' mess drank water, and for himself, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he drank nothing but water at luncheon." There is no doubt that what he said is typical of the changes that are taking place in all grades of society. Everybody knows that we are advancing steadily, quietly towards greater temperance.

In these circumstances it seems unnecessary to hurry the pace if that hurry means injury to any subject of the King. In nearly every class where intemperance used to exist there has

been a decided change within our generation. Those who for a series of years have been accustomed to watch even the trippers on a Bank Holiday are well aware that the wild drunken scenes that took place fifteen or twenty years ago very seldom occur now. The change has been accomplished, it seems to us, rather by the spread of more rational amusements than by the preaching of teetotallers. Young men who find a pleasure in active sports, such as football, cricket, golf or cycling, subtract the hours for these pleasures from the time they used to spend in the public-houses, and open-air exercise is by far the best preacher of temperance that ever existed.

On the other hand, it is no paradox to say that in some respects we need more public-houses than ever. In the remote rural districts great numbers of places of refreshment have been closed during the last quarter of a century for lack of custom. The facilities of travel, however, and an increased liking for the open air on the part of town populations, have recently sent many visitors to these parts of the country, visitors who are very far indeed from seeking an opportunity to drink; but we are sure that the majority will bear us out in saying how difficult it is to procure any rational refreshment in these remote districts. The fact that they are supplying a want is the reason why certain Trust public-houses flourish. It would, therefore, seem the wisest course to let the natural forces making for greater abstinence make their way silently but surely, instead of rushing forward at a pace beyond that of the great mass of the people, because the latter course will only lead to illicit methods of satisfying the desire for drink.

CONTRAST.

On such an eve as this I've seen the sun
Go down in glory over golden seas,
Himself the apple of Hesperides,
While from the east, whence earlier he had run,
The silent moon arose, when day was done,
And checked the deepening darkness o'er the leas,
With silvery light distinguishing the trees
That stood like ghosts of daytime, every one.

On such an eve as this I've heard, ah heard,
One with the voice divine that bound the soul,
Made all things cars, and bade all passion drown.
Long after I remember; though the town
Brins not with fulness of the ocean-rolls,
And city discord banishes the bird.

C. W. D.

The reasons given for the falling off of the entries in the Hackney Horse Show must be very suggestive to those who, for some time past, have been deploring the diminishing amount of horseflesh left in Great Britain. As fast as good hackneys come into existence they are sent abroad at a good price. It is the same, to some extent, with our Shire horses. At the sale following the late exhibition many of the best mares were purchased for South America and other foreign countries, and several of the best stallions have gone abroad to improve the breeds of our friends and rivals. On the other hand, while we send abroad the pick of our pedigree stock, we are obliged to import many of the horses that are used for ordinary work in this country. A few years ago the trade to Liverpool was very large. It consisted mostly of light horses, that were sold by auction and then used as hunters, carriage horses, light vanners, or in any other capacity for which they were suitable. In London, the increasing number of grey horses come from Belgium. All this occurs in spite of the fact that we are continually sending abroad the best of our thorough-breeds, the best of our hackneys, along with many of the choicest of our heavy horses, Shires, Clydesdales and Suffolks.

The practical question is what can be done to diminish this scarcity of horses. It may become a very serious matter should war break out. Our experience in South Africa showed the immense difficulty in securing mounts for the Army, and many of our sources of supply have been diminished since then. For example, a great many horses have been thrown out of employment by the introduction of mechanical power for omnibuses, tramcars and even cabs. We cannot look to the famous stables of pedigree stock for a large supply. They are concerned not with numbers but with quality. On the other hand, the working farmer has little inducement to take to this branch of his art. Those who know the business best are against his engaging in the breeding of light horses, unless under exceptionally favourable circumstances, because the light horse is of comparatively little use on the farm, and the price realised at the age of four or five years is not remunerative. On the other hand, an increasing number of farmers find it profitable to keep well-bred Shires, Clydesdales and Suffolks. Before the age of five, a considerable amount of

work can be got out of them, and satisfactory prices are then obtainable, while every now and then, if the blood be of good strain, a foal will be produced which brings in a very good price indeed.

In this connection Lord Egerton of Tatton has thrown out a suggestion which is certainly worth more than a passing thought. It is that Shires may be crossed with thorough-breds, in order to produce the useful class of horse that might, at a pinch, be worked on the farm and still be a capital animal for Army purposes. There is one point very much in favour of this. It is that the idea of those who breed and show cart-horses has undergone a considerable change during this year. At first they aimed chiefly at weight and substance, and thought themselves successful if they produced a horse capable of shifting a burden of several tons; but latterly the judges have paid increasing attention to action, and many of the Shires that have distinguished themselves in exhibition are really very clever movers. This certainly is in favour of the plan put forward by Lord Egerton of Tatton, and there can be little doubt that the production of half-bred horses of this type would be a profitable business. The Duke of Portland has encouraged his tenants to try it at Welbeck, and the results there, at all events, have not been unsatisfactory.

Even those who opposed the stringent measures taken by Mr. Walter Long, when he was at the Board of Agriculture, for the extirpation of rabies, must now admit that the action has been justified by the result. Scarcely any cases of hydrophobia have occurred in Great Britain for several years. It is, therefore, with all the more regret that we learn of a suspicious case in Northampton, where two dogs have been destroyed under circumstances that suggested that they were suffering from this disease. The Board of Agriculture has acted very promptly by prohibiting the movement of dogs from the Borough of Northampton and certain parishes surrounding it, and ordering that for a time all dogs should be muzzled. If the decided measures thus taken should prevent the spread of the disease all dog-owners will have reason to be grateful; though, however good the cause may be, it is always painful to see our pets subjected to the inconvenience, which sometimes amounts to torture, of the muzzle.

A movement eminently deserving of support is that to increase the postal facilities between Great Britain and other parts of the world. Already a penny postal rate between England and the United States is well within the range of practical politics, and at the moment steps are being taken to secure a similar arrangement between England and France. A deputation from the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris last year waited upon the French Under-Secretary of Posts and Telegrams, and put the case before him. They suggested that the 2½d. rate for letters should be reduced to 1d., and that of telegrams from 2d. a word to 1d. a word, and that the telephone charge between London and Paris should be reduced from 8s. to 4s. for a conversation of 3min. M. Simyan, the French Minister in question, expressed his complete approval of the principle of these reforms, and led the deputation to believe that their proposal would be favourably considered by the French Government. Some action is required on this side also, and it would be well if outside pressure were used for the purpose of urging Mr. Buxton, our Postmaster-General, to take the initiative. No one who has given a casual thought to the matter requires any demonstration of the advantages to business that would result from a general lowering of the foreign postal rates.

In our section devoted to literature will be found this week an instructive article showing how the modern "faker" of curios sets about his art; not in the rude method that used to be common, but with the aid of scholars and artists. No suspicion of counterfeit, however, can be attached to the sale of two interesting relics that took place last week. One of them was the famous cradle in which the hero of Agincourt was rocked when a baby. It was described by Fosbroke as a "wooden oblong chest swinging by links of iron between two posts, surmounted by two birds for ornament"; and there was little about it to suggest the comfort associated in later years with the cradle. Nevertheless, its great historical interest caused a keen competition for its ownership, and the bidding started at 100 guineas and did not end until Mr. Guy Laking obtained it for His Majesty by a bid of 230 guineas. The other relic was of a very different kind. It was one of the mazers of which we have frequently illustrated examples. It formed part of the Braikenridge collection and bore the inscription "Be yow mere and glade and joo the masters tokerys do byed," which identifies it with the Company of Toukers or Tuckers (that is, those who tucked cloth), afterwards associated with the Worshipful Company of Fullers. It is 3in. high, has a diameter of 9½in. and bears

the London hall-mark 1534. Its silver rim is 1½in. deep, and between the various words engraved in Gothic characters are a lozenge, a flower, an ape, a pig sejant, a dog, a quatre-foil, a hart lodged, a man seated blowing a horn and holding a staff, a flower, a hart at speed, a fruit and a flowering plant. Bidding began at £500 and ended when the relic was knocked down to Messrs. Crichton for £2,300.

Of the many forms of taxation which prevail in Italy the one that the countryman rebels most against and tries hardest to avoid is the tax on provisions carried into the town from the country. At every city gate the revenue officers exact the sum due on eggs, milk, poultry and so forth, and every device is resorted to in order to elude payment. An amusing scene was witnessed not long ago at Padua, when a countryman presented himself with a cage full of pigeons and was called on to pay. He refused, saying he had no money, and would have none till he had sold his birds. He was (perhaps naturally) not believed, and told to leave a sum on deposit and that when he came back, provided he had sold the pigeons, the money would be returned. He still refused to pay, and the revenue officers refused to let him pass. He thereupon opened the cage, the birds flew off, and, free of his wares, he was allowed to pass into the town. He was no sooner within the gates than he whistled loudly to his pigeons, who flew back at his call and were put into their cage again. The revenue officers outside the gates were in happy ignorance of how completely they had been "done," and the witness of the scene knew not whether to admire most the craftiness of the man, or the training and discipline of his pigeons.

MARCH.

From distant grey to nearer dun
The sudden blue of shadowed sun
Sweeps like a tender glance,
And branches of the winter trees
From deepest sapphire by degrees
Change as the clouds advance.
O modest brown and gentle fawn!
I love you yet before the dawn
Of green resplendent spring;
Dreaming of summer days you hold
The memory of pure winter's cold
Irresolute lingering.
Like sweet Griselda's self you pause
Ere brodered robe and spangled gauze
Her smooth brown limbs involve.
But emerald spears begin to thrust
Thro' dry dead herbage brown as rust
And quicken your resolve.
O happy season of the brink,
When Nature seems to wait and thin:
And pays her last adieu;
Then tossing wild arms to the sky
She seizes spring's embroidery
And decks herself anew.

PETER LESLIE.

To the unbusiness-like the Business Exhibition is an object of awe and wonder. After going through the amazing collection of apparatus for introducing method and simplicity into the arranging of one's letters, the care of documents and other matter appertaining to an office, the spectator is almost made to ask if in time the use of the clerk will not be dispensed with altogether. Here are mechanical timekeepers which record every outgoing and incoming of each man employed; here are typewriters that can be applied to book-keeping, and not only chronicle columns of figures, but add them up at the bottom; here are, in a word, a thousand ingenious devices for saving time and preventing mistakes. It is unlikely that anybody will be able to go to the exhibition without bringing away something that will be of assistance to them thenceforth in the conduct of their business. No one could have dreamt when it was first announced that the organisers could have made it so attractive.

A correspondent from a county a little to the south of London writes: "I am afraid that some of us have been just a little too clever with our sweet peas this season, and that those who go to work with them more slowly but more surely will have the laugh at us. Hitherto we have prided ourselves in sowing the peas in September and so getting them well established early and bringing them to bloom long before those that are later planted. Even after the winter before the one which is now passing, in which the cold was just as severe, according to the thermometer's reckoning, as it has been this winter, the sweet peas thus early planted did gloriously. But the cold of the present winter, perhaps because it was so driven home and intensified by the strong wind prevailing at the same time,

seems to have cut the peas back so that they will hardly recover themselves, and the later planted, which had less growth to suffer from the frost, will bloom better. Still, year in and year out in our climate, it is worth while planting them early."

The authorities seem much more active in checking the salmon poachers in Scotland than in England; or would it be more correct to say that the activities of the poacher in the Northern division call for a good deal more checking? In either case the fact is that we seldom read English records similar to that from Hawick last week of one James Rodgers being fined £2, with 30s. costs, or, in default, twenty-one days, "for fishing with cleek and light at Laidlaw's Cauld, on the Teviot," one day last December. It sounds a pleasant sport, and one feels some sympathy with James Rodgers, further convicted of "cleeking" a sea-trout from the Wilton Mill lade

three days later and being fined similarly, with like penalty for default of payment.

The danger of being drowned in the hunting-field is not one which is very obvious, yet we have had already this year to record an instance of life lost in this way—that of a whip, in Tipperary. Last week Colonel Dunlop of Lockerbie House had a narrow escape from a like fate while hunting with the Dumfriesshire hounds. His horse got beyond his control in crossing a ford of the Annan River, and the rider lost his seat, but failed to clear his foot from the stirrup. He was rescued only with difficulty, after being under water for many seconds, and under the circumstances was lucky enough to get off so well. The most famous modern instance of drowning in the hunting-field is probably that of Sir Charles Slingsby, Master of the York and Ainsty; but even that is an old story now.

THE FINANCE OF SMALL HOLDINGS.

WHATEVER else the Small Holdings Act may not have accomplished, it has provided an inexhaustible topic of conversation and of serious discussion. At church and market, in railway train and cottage, wherever two or three people gather together, one can hear them, sometimes in hot argument and sometimes in quiet talk, setting forth the difficulties which are met in the provision of small holdings. The situation has altered in many respects even since the passing of the Bill. Owing to the high price of provisions and other causes there has been a distinct tendency upward in the price of land, as witness what was obtained last week at a sale near Doncaster, where land which had been a long time worked as small holdings brought, in one case at least, as much as £120 an acre. No doubt this was an exceptional figure, and the purchaser has exceptional means of deriving a profit from his new possession. But even in places where there has been no great boom in land values, it is found that the estimated £30 an acre which it was supposed at the beginning had only to be paid is very considerably exceeded; and those who for the first time in their lives have tried to form a definite idea of the cost of equipment are obviously amazed at the result. Not that definite figures are forthcoming everywhere. The initial difficulty of obtaining

land is that with which the great majority of the County Councils are now dealing. In a few cases estates, or parts of estates, have been offered for sale; but in many others, as Lord Portsmouth explained in a letter which we published a fortnight ago, land in many districts is let for a period of time varying from twelve months to several years, and it would be impossible to take any action until the lease runs out. In many cases public opinion is almost certain to rebel against attempts to force those who are occupying land at the moment to give it up. It is no doubt true that the Act uses compulsion as something to be kept in the background; but in Great Britain it would be dangerous to put it into practice. Where land is available, the cost, which must ultimately fall on the small holder himself, is assuming a very serious appearance. We have to remember that at Catshill, Winterslow, and other places where nests of small holdings have succeeded, the land was originally obtained at a bargain price. In fact, its coming into the market was the cause of the small holdings being started. A few weeks ago we published an estimate by Sir John Dorington of the probable cost. There is probably nobody in England who has a more intimate knowledge of rural affairs than Sir John Dorington, who has had a long experience both of owning land and of the management of local affairs. His estimate that it would



J. Gale.

THE FARM ON THE MOOR.

Copyright.

cost about £500 to erect a suitable house and buildings for a small farm is an extremely moderate one. One of our correspondents, Mr. W. E. Staines, writing from Lilleshall Lodge, Newport, Salop, raises the question in the following letter: "I have read with interest the article in last week's COUNTRY LIFE, 'Progress in Small Holdings.' Certainly the question of the cost of equipment is the one that will make the scheme most difficult to work. And it would be very interesting if you would give fuller information as to how Sir John Dorington arrives at his figures, showing what accommodation he allows for, and of what material the buildings are to be built; £500 appears to me a very small sum for the erection of a house with adequate buildings for forty acres." A copy of this communication was sent to Sir John Dorington, and his reply will be read with very great interest. It is as follows: "Lypiatt Park, Stroud. The price which I mentioned for the equipment of a small holding is only a shot based on some experiences. I allowed £250 for the house, which I think is sufficient, and a similar sum for shedding, pigsties, etc. This ought to do, and is the sum which in conversation with the members of the County Council has been commonly considered to be about a fair figure. At page 357 of Miss Jebb's book the actual cost in a particular case was £468, and on the next page the cost for a cottage by itself £286. In 1868-70 I brought eighty-seven acres of waste into cultivation, divided it into fields and fenced it in on all sides, provided water, built a very good farmhouse with barn, yards and stalling. The whole cost was £1,526 and the present rental is £89. But these buildings and fences are far in excess of what would probably have to be put on a small holding." The reference which he makes to Miss Jebb's book is to the account of the cost of erecting homesteads



S. W. Morrison.

THE CHILDREN'S CARE.

Copyright.

at Catshill. The house referred to was built at a cost of £240, and this means that there was no outlay except what was strictly necessary. Miss Jebb, in a subsequent page, gives the estimated cost of another small holding which it was proposed to erect. The estimate was: House and buildings £400, well sinking £20, haulage £30, architect's fees £18. The cottages at Catshill have been thus described by Mr. Thornely, clerk to the County Council: "Very good houses, consisting of a good kitchen and living-room, with back kitchen and larder and three good bedrooms, with necessary outbuildings, including stable, tool-house, copper for boiling pig food, and generally two pigsties, have been erected, and the



AN OLD HOMESTEAD.

contracted price has averaged £286, excluding hauling." From other material at hand we can see that about £500 is what the erection of a house and buildings on a small farm would cost. In a new edition of the "Book of the Farm" there is a table of prices arranged according to the rents that happen to be paid, and this in reality is a better way to do it than to proceed by the number of acres, because the land is a sure indication of the capacity of the farm. The nearest approach that we can get to the rent which Sir John Dorington receives for the holdings he describes is £80. On this a cottage was built for £190, of which £70 went for mason work, £70 for carpentering, £30 for slater work and £20 for plaster work. The buildings cost £310, of which the mason received £130, the carpenter £100 and the slater £80. The entire cost of the putting up of buildings for this farm was thus £500. The figures for a still smaller farm with a rent of only £40 came altogether to £325, of which £140 was for the cottage and £185 for the buildings. Of course, in each case the haulage and so forth was done by the tenant. The figures are very moderate indeed, but they do not represent by any means the whole of the outlay for what we call the equipment. In addition money would have to be paid for fences and gates, drains, roads and water supply, items the cost of which must vary considerably with the district in which the farm is situated. Moderate as is this payment for equipment, it must add very considerably to the rent. If we take the size of the farm to be forty acres, which is probably above rather than below the truth, an outlay of £325 would mean an addition, according to the classic from which we have quoted, of £8 2s. 6d. an acre—a very considerable deduction from the £40 of actual rent, and with further deductions made for the drainage, water and other necessities, there cannot be much left for the owner. In the case of a small holder outlay of this kind would simply represent an addition to his rent, and it is obvious that the burden must come more heavily upon a small than upon a large farm. Take, for example, one of a rent of £500 for which a £500 house has been put up, and buildings to the value of £1,100, making a total of £1,600; that is to say, the total cost for all buildings is a little more than three times the rent, whereas in a holding with a rental of £40 and an outlay of £325 the cost for buildings is a little more than eight times the rent. Moreover, it would be very bad policy to concentrate attention on cheapness only. Under the most favourable circumstances, the cost of repairs is a considerable item of expenditure, ranging from 2 per cent. to 5 per cent. on the capital outlay. In a very cheaply-constructed house it would naturally be much more than in a well-built one. That is one thing that makes us sceptical about the cheap cottages that have been so freely advertised. Mr. Munro Ferguson built a cottage for £150, which is quoted as an example of what might possibly be done. It is by no means a bad-looking cottage on paper, with its porch and surrounding rail; but, at the same time, it is misleading to call it a £150 cottage, as the total cost came in reality to £170—the £20 extra being for a sewer system and water supply which were added after the house was built, but caused no structural alterations. It is too small a cottage for a tiny holding. It consists, in the first place, of a living-room 14ft. by 12ft.; two bedrooms, of which the larger is 13ft. 2in. by 11ft., and the other 11ft. square; a kitchen 14ft. 1in. by 10ft., larder, scullery and coal-house. More accommodation would obviously be required in a small farmhouse, as the greatest essential to success in such a place is that the sons and daughters

may be encouraged to stay at home and work the land, so that no labour bill, or at worst only a light labour bill, should be incurred. Besides, as the small holder, if he is successful, is continually looking forward to an increase in his land, it would be very bad policy indeed to begin by grudging him house room; and the outhouses, which the labourer is able to dispense with altogether, would in his case be a necessity. In Mr. Munro Ferguson's cottage there was no outhousing except a place for coals; but if our small farmer is going in for dairying, he must obviously have a dairy, and modern sanitation demands that this building should be separate from the house. Even if he is not going to make butter, hygienic considerations make it advisable that he should keep his milk where it will not be contaminated with anything in the kitchen—the building, in fact, ought to be a separate one. If he grows fruit or vegetables, he must have a place where they can be occasionally stored; and if, as will be the case in most instances, he adopts mixed farming, there must evidently be stables and sheds for the cattle and horses employed by him. These are considerations which those who work the Small Holdings Act cannot afford to ignore.



J. Gale.

IN MARSHLAND.

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FROM THE FARMS.

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

MR. C. ADEANE made a very interesting statement at the recent meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. It was to the effect that as soon as the society has attained to a sound financial position, steps are to be taken for widening the circuit along which its shows are held. For a long time it has been necessary on the part of the management to consider carefully before holding a show in any district, not so much whether this was likely to have or not to have a stimulating effect upon the agriculturists, but how far it was likely to be a pecuniary success. As soon as they can afford it the managers mean to change this policy; that is to say, they will hold exhibitions in districts where agriculture is carried on, even though they may be so sparsely populated as to make a profitable return almost impossible. In all this Mr. Adeane was expressing a principle that ought to govern the doings of the society. It was never intended to be a money-

making concern. Those who originated it had for their object solely the desire to benefit agriculture by showing the high standard that could be attained in the fattening and general preparation of farmstock. But till last year the operations were confined by the financial difficulties. We hope now that a new era of prosperity has begun, and that the society may henceforth pursue its true mission without paying too much regard to the merely monetary results.

CANADA'S GENEROUS IMPERIALISM.

The resolution which has been passed by the Canadian Parliament, to grant a free homestead of 320 acres, or its equivalent in "land scrip," to each of the volunteers from the "prairie" provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta who fought in the South African War, is one which strongly appeals to our sense of what is right and also of what is picturesque. To people who live at home in crowded England the very phrase "prairie province" suggests charming associations, and the names of the provinces themselves are wondrous. The idea of those men who have generously borne their share

of the white man's burden thus recompensed by the "prairie grant" appeals to every sentiment of poetical justice.

THE WINTER CROPS.

March came roaring in like a lion this year, and farmers whose work at a critical moment has been rudely interrupted



F. Babbage.

TATTON DRAY KING.

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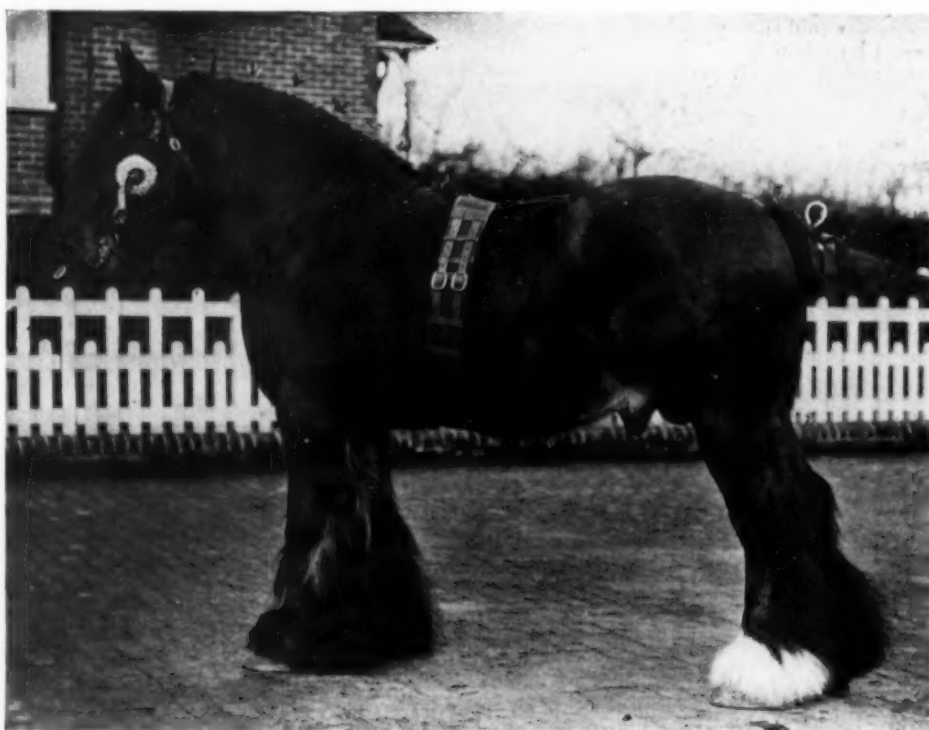
may take comfort from the old adage which says that "it will go out like a lamb." As it happens, they stood much in need of good weather, because the winter, with its alternation of fine sunny days and hard frosts, has not been good for the wheat and beans sown last November. We were looking at some beans the other day which up till Christmas had been growing steadily; but, though of a hardy sort, the frosts had been too much for them, and the crop is practically destroyed. Only a plant here and there has managed to survive; the others have been cut down and have practically disappeared. It should be added that the situation is a very exposed one on the side of a hill, and not far from a mill-pond, the local query being whether the water attracts the frost. However, last year on a field adjacent there was a crop of beans which looked excellent in March, and, as a matter of fact, yielded an exceptionally heavy crop. Complaints of a similar kind are being heard about the wheat this year; it stands urgently in need of a spell of fine weather to aid its recovery from the rigours of winter. It must be said, too, that the farmer is looking askance at his ricks, especially in cases where he held back last year's produce in the hope that it would rise to something well over 40s. a quarter. Instead of doing that, the price during the last fortnight has shown a decided tendency to drop, and a suspicion has been engendered that the scarcity was to some extent artificial; that is to say, that it has been manipulated by speculators for their own purpose. It is the same with the butter scare; as we thought was likely, a fall in price has already occurred. When people found butter higher in price than it had been for years they went straight away from the shops and purchased margarine, lard, jam and other butter substitutes, with the result that the retailers have been obliged to drop their prices. Some have made a wry mouth in the interval, as they assert that the price they receive from the public is not equal to that which they are obliged to give the dealer. Yet some of those advisers of whom the British farmer has so many were a few weeks ago telling dairymen that they should give up selling milk and take to making butter. Had they done so, they would have found themselves in an awkward position to-day.

THE DANGERS OF DAMAGED SEED.

March is the great month of the year for sowing seed, and farmers therefore may be glad of a kindly warning on the subject. It is a custom of many of them to save seed corn from their own crops, and this method has at least the merit of inexpensiveness to commend it. Moreover, the careful man who keeps his land clean, knows exactly what weeds he may expect to grow from seed taken from his own land; but yet there are attendant dangers, one of which the Board of Agriculture has pointed out. In 1904 the low germinating power of much of the grain saved for seed in Aberdeenshire was pointed out, and experiments were conducted by Mr. R. B. Greig of the Agricultural Department, Marischal College, Aberdeen, with a view to ascertaining how far the unseasonable harvest weather of 1903 had affected the quality of the oats intended for seed in 1904. Among a number of samples which were set aside for seed, but which were not specially selected, it was found that in six samples which had been three weeks in stock in rainy or misty weather, the average germination was 40 per cent., in eight samples four weeks in stock it was 33 per cent. and in six samples five to six weeks in stock it was 29 per cent. Farmers should, therefore, be careful to avoid sowing seed from grain which has been long exposed to bad weather; and it will probably be found desirable to purchase grain from localities where harvest conditions last year were moderately favourable. Home-grown seed should have its germinating power tested, and should be sown more thickly than usual. The truth is that in nothing should the farmer exercise a more careful supervision than in the choice of seed.

SHIRE HORSES.

In continuation of last week's notice, it may be useful to note the champion awards given too late to receive attention last week. The Shire Horse Society's gold cup for the best stallion or colt in the show was taken by Lord Egerton of Tatton for Tatton Dray King, Lord Rothschild's Childwick Champion



F. Babbage.

CHILDWICK CHAMPION.

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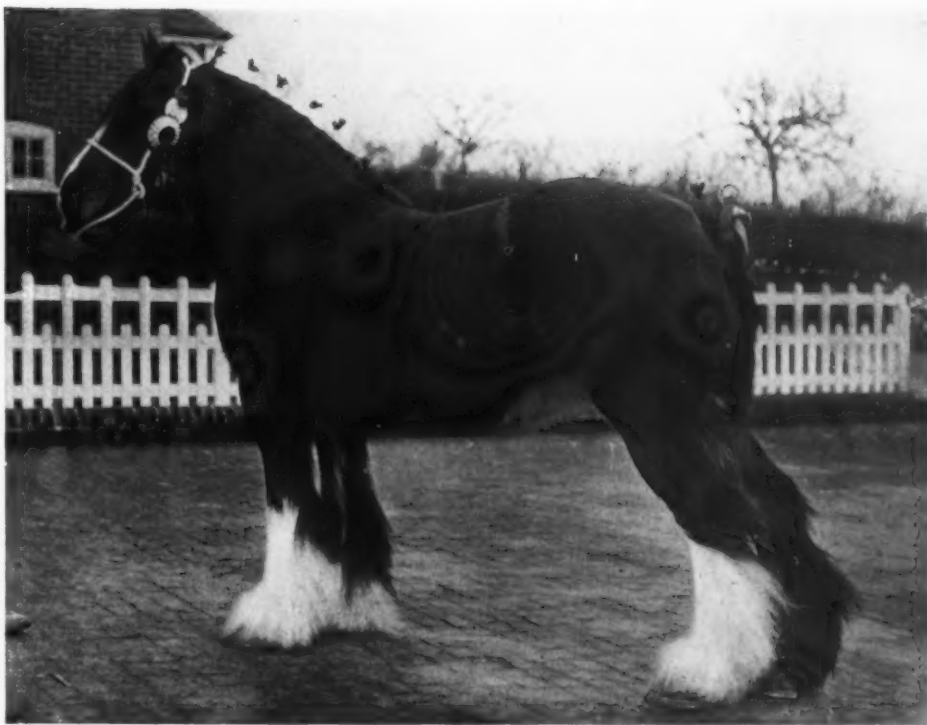
being the reserve. The gold cup for the best colt aged one, two, or three years was given to Mr. James Gould for Lymm Grey. The challenge cup for the best mare was taken by Lord Rothschild's Belle Cole, the dam of the colt for which Lord Winterstoke gave 900 guineas at the Tring sale. Pailton Sorais, belonging to Mr. Max Michaelis, was the runner-up. The junior

championship for fillies was taken by Mr. Atterbury with Fuchsia II., the reserve being Mr. William Barnsfield's Forest Queen. Lord Rothschild's mare Belle Cole also won the cup for the best mare four years old and over, while Mr. Sparkes received a cup for the best gelding, Oldfield Ploughman, the reserve being Partington Waggoner, belonging to Mr. Davies. At the sales which followed very satisfactory prices ruled, showing that there is far from being any falling off in the demand for pedigree cart-horses. In fact, never at any time were the signs more encouraging for a breeder. The season of 1908 begins with a fine show and with an excellent sale.

THE HOUSE-DOVE.

DOMESTIC pigeons, unlike rooks, which are noxious animals and a nuisance, may be the subject of a qualified or special property (says Stephen's "Commentaries on the Laws of England") so long as they continue on a person's land or premises and are in his keeping or possession. "Bees which fly from and out of my hive are mine, so long as I can keep them in sight and have power to pursue them. Though a swarm lights on my tree, I have no more property in them than I have in the birds which make their nests thereon." So wrote Bracton in the reign of Henry III., and such would appear to be the law (modified somewhat by the case shortly referred to) applicable to the domestic pigeon, and, in fact, every other species of animal *feræ naturæ* (by nature wild) at the present day. It was formerly asserted that, if an animal possessed what is known in law as the *animus revertendi* (the intention or spirit of returning), or the owner was in pursuit, the legal right to it remained in such owner; but this would appear to be no longer law, as a case as far back as 1824 (*Hannam v. Mockett*) decided that all property in pigeons ceases as soon as they depart from the premises of their owner. In fact, after they have left their owner's land there is no more property in them than in the "birds of the air which may breed in one man's land and devour the crops of another"; yet a person is not justified in shooting them except under the circumstances we will refer to later. Suppose, as often happens, two owners of pigeons have their premises adjoining each other, and it is known the doves of A nest in the buildings of B. A would, under such circumstances, on the decision of *Hannam v. Mockett*, have no right to enter on the premises of B for the purpose of taking away the eggs; he would, in fact, be an absolute trespasser in so doing. By the way, there would appear to be a great analogy between this matter and that of fruit falling on another's land, and yet the law applicable to the two cases is somewhat different. If fruit falls from the overhanging branches of A upon the land of B, it is said A would be justified in peaceably entering for the purpose of retaking it, if B refused to deliver it up or allow him to enter on his land for that purpose. It appears, therefore, that the law allows a person to follow the fruit dropping from his trees, but not his pigeons or their offspring. We will go further, and presume the pigeons have young ones (which they will have in the ordinary course of events); the law here protects such young, and gives to B a qualified or special property in them (so say the commentaries referred to) on account of their inability (*propter impotentiam*) while on his land, and, of course, A would lose all legal right to the progeny.

It is said to be no offence to take and carry away any animal which, though really tame, is found wandering far from



F. Babbage.

BELLE COLE.

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its habitation as if it were wild, when it is not known to be tame by the person who takes it, and thus may be lawfully shot and converted into a pigeon pie. Under the Larceny Act, 1861, a person who unlawfully and wilfully kills, wounds, or takes any house-dove or pigeon is liable to a penalty of £2 above the value of the bird. Apart from this Act, one would almost think that, on the decision of *Hannam v. Mockett*, a person might ensconce himself on his own land and shoot every pigeon of his neighbour that happened to cross his boundary, an act which would be obviously intolerable. Where A gave notice to B that if B's pigeons continued to come on his land he would shoot them, and he afterwards shot one and left it on the ground, it was held that this was not an unlawful killing within the meaning of the statute, as it was an act *bonâ fide* done in defence of property. If sued in a civil action for the value of the pigeon, he could counter-claim for the damage (if any) to his crops. It is interesting to note that a pigeon is to a certain extent real property, in that, if the owner of an estate dies without having disposed of it by will, a dove-house with its contents would pass to his heir-at-law along with the estate, and



F. Babbage.

PAILTON SORAIS.

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not belong to his executors or administrators as part of his personal estate, like cows, sheep, or poultry. Pigeons, being animals *feræ nature*, can in no circumstances be taken under a distress for rent.
M. E. J.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

MANY who read Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt* (Macmillan) will feel that a Plutarch might have found in it a worthy theme. He would, if he were alive to-day, find Egyptian history of the nineteenth century as enthralling as it was when the girl Cleopatra flung herself into the mature arms of Julius Cæsar. Natures as rich and diverse as any of antiquity would present themselves for study. It might seem difficult to find another contrast as striking as that between Mark Antony and Octavius, yet to match these Romans England sent to Egypt General Gordon and Lord Cromer himself, two men as far as the poles asunder, but the same to the extent that neither ever offers an ignoble trait to view. In this lies the interest of the book to the general reader. The history of Egyptian finance from 1876 to 1907 is laid before us with a lucid and accurate pen; but it chiefly concerns those who "at some future time may be concerned in Oriental administration." At any rate, no good purpose would be served by attempting to sum up its intricate ramifications in a short article. But the actors who appear on the scene are of the first importance. In the centre, with or without his will, stands the author, Lord Cromer, who unconsciously supplies a great deal of material for his own portrait. As a boy he saw the "half-lunatic savage" Ibrahim Pasha in London. It was this Ibrahim who settled a theological dispute by ordering the religious leaders of the Wahabi sect to be killed. Mr. Evelyn Baring's introduction to public life was in India, where for four years he acted as private secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Northbrook. On his return he was, on the advice of Sir Louis Mallet, nominated by Lord Goschen as Commissioner of the Debt in Egypt, taking up his duties on March 2nd, 1877. Egyptian finance has been mismanaged since the days of the Pharaohs. Extortion had become such a habit with the Government, and the people for so many generations had been accustomed to it, that the moral ideas of the West were not so much as understood. It was a new experience for tyrants and submissive subjects alike to be brought into contact with the small body of European officials who came into existence as a result of Lord Goschen's mission.

We were all (says Lord Cromer) capable of forming and of expressing independent opinions, and we were all determined to do our duty to the best of our abilities in the discharge of the functions which were respectively assigned to us. . . . It was well understood that, if the British officials found that their advice was systematically neglected, and that they could not, with a proper sense of what was due to their own self-respect, carry on their duties in a fairly satisfactory manner, they would resign their appointments, a course which would not only have caused a good deal of embarrassment, but would also have strengthened the hostile public opinion then clamouring against the existing régime in Egypt in terms which were daily becoming more menacing.

Lord Cromer gives us a vivid account of the official shifts to raise the wind, of the speculations of officials, the absence of courts of justice, the confusion of accounts and the general waste. If the head of the Ordnance Department heard of some new description of cannon, he would not order one for experiment, but dozens, on the ground that "Egypt could not remain behind other countries in military matters." Ismail Pasha spent large sums in bribing the European Press. A modern Cleopatra ran up an account of £150,000 with a Parisian dressmaker; the money-lender accompanied the tax-collector and lent the amount of the impost on the security of the crops, so that the husbandman was robbed of the fruits of his toil; "numerous claims from such humble individuals as camel-drivers, barbers, donkey-boys, etc., had to be included in the floating debt." Lord Vivian declared that the financial position of the country was "as bad as it could well be." While Lord Cromer and his colleagues were spending the hot Egyptian afternoons in an endeavour to produce order out of the financial chaos, other affairs were ripening to an issue. He traces the mutiny of 1879 (the precursor of Arabi's rebellion) to a hint given by Ismail Pasha, who wanted to get rid of Nubar Pasha and his European Ministers. Mention of the year 1879 carries the mind back to the struggle of Gladstone and Beaconsfield, because it was then that the famous Midlothian pilgrimage took place, and the Liberal leader opposed his ideas of "the Concert of Europe" to his rival's spirited foreign policy. With the fine precision which is a characteristic of the book, Lord Cromer analyses the meaning of the phrase as it applied to Egypt. France did not wish to see England's foot placed firmly on the bank of the Nile, but was hampered by the necessity of "great Paris syndicates"; Italy, restlessly ambitious, hovered round in the hope of obtaining a share of the government of Egypt; Russia stood aloof, having no local interests to serve; Germany and Austria were not friendly to Anglo-French co-operation, but had the interests of certain German creditors to look after. We can only glance at the outcome without going into details.

On June 26th, 1879, the Sultan formally deposed Ismail and nominated Tewfik as his successor. The salient facts to be kept in mind are that during 1880 the work of financial reform went steadily forward, and in that year Lord Cromer received a great appointment in India and was succeeded in Egypt by Sir Auckland Colvin. While civil administration had advanced, nothing had been done to remove the grievances of the army. Hence the historic petition of the colonels in which for the first time Arabi appears on the scene, although the prime mover at first was Colonel Ali Bey Fehmi. The petition was refused and the order given for the colonels' arrest, but they were saved by native soldiers. In the course of a few months a third mutiny took place, and the "mutineers dictated their own terms at the point of the bayonet." At bottom the quarrel was Egyptian against Turk, and during the ensuing months the Sultan endeavoured to reassert his authority in Egypt; but as this would have meant retrogression, he was steadily opposed by England and France. So the prologue to a great drama was quietly unrolled. Under the spirited Ministry of Gambetta France was as decided as England, and in 1882 the famous Joint Note was addressed to the Khedive. Shortly afterwards Gambetta was forced to resign, and the less enterprising M. de Freycinet took his place; but foreign intervention of some sort became now a necessity. The story of Arabi Pasha, of the bombardment and burning of Alexandria is well known; but what does Lord Cromer, who has had unequalled opportunities of going behind the scenes, think of the chief actor? Undoubtedly more interest now is felt in Mr. Wilfred Blunt, Arabi's champion, than in Arabi himself. Lord Cromer says, caustically, that:

With the exception of some knowledge of the Arabic language, he possessed none of the qualifications necessary to ensure success in the execution of so difficult and delicate a mission. He advised the Nationalists to hold to the army or they would be "annexed to Europe." The advice was, without doubt, well meant, but it was certainly inopportune and mischievous.

And he arrives at this conclusion:

The impartial historian must perforce record his name amongst those who, by ill-advised action at a critical moment, unwittingly contributed to bring about the solution which they most of all deplored.

Such is the verdict of the great man of business on the poet. Let us pass on to see what he thinks of the prophet, General Gordon. It is summed up in this sentence:

Had I known General Gordon better I would never have agreed to his appointment.

A man like Lord Cromer, accustomed not only to deliberate over every act, but to measure every phrase that proceeds from his mouth, must have found it difficult indeed to understand Gordon, who never dreamt that there was any need for consideration or for not saying what came uppermost in his mind. He quotes with approval Lord Salisbury's cynical remark that it is as difficult to deal with the rinderpest as with a great national sentiment, and he himself wrote to Lord Granville on January 21st, 1884:

It is as well that Gordon should be under my orders, but a man who habitually consults the Prophet Isaiah when he is in a difficulty is not apt to obey the orders of anyone.

But man shall not live by bread alone. England's greatness is due in at least equal measure to her Gordons and to her Cromers. For those fine touches of the hero, the martyr, saint and apostle awake human thoughts and aspirations and beget a greatness of self-sacrifice the value of which is priceless. Gordon and Cromer were but instruments of the Will. And had prudent counsels prevailed, would the results have been the same? "The war against bankruptcy is practically over," telegraphed Baring in 1887, "and Egypt has gone on prospering, the Mahdi is crushed, and the Sudan pacified." Gordon's memorial in Khartoum is a college of learning. Who shall say that a more cautious policy would have produced the same results? The stirring example of Gordon would have been a priceless heritage, even if his work had been left undone. Lord Cromer found an ideal officer in Lord Kitchener, who was, "from the commencement of the operations, placed exclusively under my orders in all matters," and he relates with pardonable pride that he was a commander "whom I had practically myself chosen." But Lord Cromer himself was in the most responsible position:

I found myself in the somewhat singular position of a civilian, who had had some little military training in his youth, but who had had no experience of war, whose proper functions were diplomacy and administration, but who, under the stress of circumstances in the "Land of Paradox," had to be ultimately responsible for the maintenance and, even to some extent, for the movements of an army of some 25,000 men in the field. And he remarks of the hero of Omdurman:

Like many another military commander, the bonds which united him and his subordinates were those of stern discipline on the one side and, on the other, the respect due to superior talent and the confidence felt in the resourcefulness of a strong and masterful spirit, rather than the affectionate obedience yielded to the behests of a genial chief.

The alertness of Lord Cromer's mind, his scrupulous endeavour to be fair and just to those whom by temperament he finds it difficult to appreciate, and his stern judicial impartiality, make this book the best treatise extant on the political history of modern Egypt.

CURLING: A CONTRAST.



P. Smith.

ON A SCOTTISH LOCH.

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WE are all curlers in Crashie Howe. As soon as we leave the school our first care in life is to possess ourselves by some means of a pair of stones, and our second to enquire for vacancies in one of the eight rinks that represent the club. We are all curlers with, I think, the sole exception of Tom Dowie, who has a wooden leg, and now, after two serious accidents upon the ice, has given up the unequal contest, and contents himself with criticising the performances of lesser men. He is usually the first to turn out in the morning, and the last to leave, and when we are in doubt we ask him to test the strength of the ice, as he suffers no inconvenience from wetting his foot. Not only are we all curlers, but we are curlers first and all other things after. There is no doubt that we are industrious, but all industry is suspended as soon as Peter's Moss is fit to play upon. One of the most valuable characteristics of the frost is its faculty for putting a stop to almost all outdoor labour. Masons, dykers and drainers can do nothing as long as it holds, and farm labourers are reduced to odd carting and those innumerable little domestic jobs about the farmyard that are always with us, but are seldom of a pressing nature. The carpenter has not the same excuse for playing truant, it is true, but he may have the luck to find his employer on the ice waiting for a man to make up his rink, and in that case he will hear no more of his lost time. Peter's Moss is bearing, and the entire parish lays down its tools and forsakes its daily round of occupation. There is a

sheet of hard, black ice, three good inches thick, and fit to carry without a sign of weakness all the able-bodied men and all the curling stones in Crashie Howe, to say nothing of the despised race of skaters who may have driven over from the town, and must content themselves with the edges of the ice and such parts of it as are not fit for a more worthy purpose. I have been there myself before breakfast, and already found the secretary, adorned with a flying comforter of brilliant red, at work marking off the rinks and "ringing" the ice. As soon as we come within shouting distance we greet each other with the same anxious query, which will be put and answered a thousand times in the course of the day, "Is it going to hold?" We are both convinced that it will hold, and give each other that comforting assurance, for the curler's optimism is a continual triumph of hope over experience. He tells me that he has fixed the "Cup" for Saturday (it is likely that long ere that the surface of Peter's Moss will be given back to ducks and water-hens, but one must have faith), and hastens off to the telegraph office to communicate with other secretaries, and complete his arrangements. As I return I meet the first of the assembling throng, trundling along his stones in a wheelbarrow. A cart full of stones from a distant farm passes the door as I am at breakfast, and shortly after a small boy appears, bubbling with excitement, to enquire if my rink is made up, for his father would be willing to play for me if I am a man short. There is great activity on the ice by this time, and I can see on the sky-line a shepherd descending

across the moor, who must have left home before dawn, in the sure belief that his services would be wanted. Then a distracted figure passes up the lane, going back to the village with a broken handle, and desperately turning over in his head the most likely places where he may find a spare one. More messengers come in—it is the privilege or penalty of living near the scene of operations—to ask me if I happen to have a spare "besom," or if I could put up Mr. Halliday's horse. Then I must put the handles in my own stones, and cram some bread and cheese into my pocket, and bring out my broom from its safe retreat in the eight-day clock, and knock the dust off it. It is eleven o'clock before all are assembled, and the match begins; and, for the hours that follow, everyone is so closely absorbed in the struggle, with all the powers of mind and body that the game demands chained to the spot, that there is little time to look about and wonder at the transformation that has taken place in one's neighbours since the week began, or even to make certain that the wind is keeping up and there are no ugly



Mrs. H. Ross.

THE LAST STONE.

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clouds in view. But old Tom Dowie from his position on the bank has a great picture before him and a chorus of stirring sounds in his ears. These are the men—"sober, canny bodies"—that he knows well and has met a hundred times at kirk or mart, and seen no change in them from day to day for years. But now a new fire of enthusiasm and intoxication of conflict is upon them. His own children stand amazed at the spectacle of the minister executing a war dance, broom in air, to celebrate a hard-won victory, and the silent and morose Hendry, the postman, is displaying unsuspected funds of humour, poetry and pathos in his fluent and deafening discourse.

And so the tide of battle ebbs and flows, till the last End is played and the scores are totalled up, and Crashie Howe knows itself victor or vanquished as the case may be. Even if we have no more play for weeks it will take us some time to discuss, to explain and to sympathise with each other over the many turning points and critical moments of the day. It has been clouding over as the afternoon wore on, and when at last in the darkness I make my way up the lane and turn in at my own door, I am startled by a drop of rain on my cheek. It is very sad to look forward already to another period of inactivity. It will be a dreary duty to-morrow, that of wheeling back my stones through the mud. But at the moment, as I fling my weary limbs into a chair, I am content to look upon the other side. It is much to have been able to add this day to the growing treasure of one's curling memories.

I come out on to the verandah of a vast hotel in the Engadine, and watch the sun slip forth from behind the mountain beyond and light up the valley before me with a dazzling radiance. The world is infinitely clean and cold and beautiful. The frost lies like a mantle upon it, still and breathless. Before me is a broad, square sheet of pale green ice. There are men at work upon it, shaving and spraying, brushing and polishing the surface. One is reminded of a housemaid cleaning a marble floor. Little cracks are being filled with water, excrescences are being rubbed away. And now an Italian servant from the hotel is bringing down curling stones two at a time and an armful of brooms. When all is in readiness, and the stones lie along the rinkside in a symmetrical



Ward Muir.

UNDER A BLAZING SUN.

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row, with the brooms bunched together in front of them, the workmen depart, and I go in to breakfast. A full hour later, and the sun has had time to fill the air with warmth before the players appear. They stroll down the flight of steps chiselled from the snow at the rinkside and the game is made up. The players are dressed in sweaters and broad-brimmed hats, with rubber-soled boots, and move silently upon the shining surface. The stones are delivered without the slightest effort, and swing slowly with the turn of the handle to right or left as they run. There are no fierce driving shots, no shouts of conflict, but all goes smoothly, delicately—a glittering, dainty and precise performance. Shots that are quite impossible in Scotland are easily taken on this ice, and some of the finest players in Europe are assembled here. But can this game of signs and gentle undertones be Scotland's "roaring game"? A lunch-bell rings in the hotel above, and the attendant comes down to clear the stones away, for if they are left lying on the ice beneath that blazing sun they grow warm and sink into cups. And some few minutes later one is lunching upon an open verandah with a glorious panorama full in view. We shall play again in the afternoon, for the company is made up of curlers, who are specialists in the art, and come out year after year solely to curl. This is the game of curling simplified and made beautiful,



Ward Muir.

THE RINK AT CELERINA.

Copyright

reduced to a science and set in a frame of perfect beauty. And as the evening falls, and the cold is like a stab at every breath, I turn into the hotel to dress for dinner—once more the richer for an added curling memory.

BERTRAM SMITH.

THE BEGGARS OF MOSCOW.

THE old city of Moscow could not easily be dissociated from the 50,000 beggars who haunt its snowy streets. The city belongs to them; if the city rats own the drains, they own the streets. They are part of the city, they are in perfect harmony with it; take away the beggars and you destroy something vital. Some are so old and weather-battered that they make the Kremlin itself look older, and of those who lie at the monastery doors some are so fearfully pitiable in their decrepitude that they lend power to the churches. The question suggests itself, what would the Moscow streets be like without them, without the gaunt giants who hang down upon one and moan for bread, without the little cripples who squirm upon the pavement and scream their wants at the passer-by? They are the plague of the pedestrian, but also his perpetual interest, for there are among them some of the strangest people one could expect to meet anywhere, worn-out, yellow-whiskered men with icicles in their beards, limbleless trunks of men and ghastly abortions of women and children. One sees among them Letts, Poles, Jews, Tartars, Bohemians, Chinese and Bokharese, specimens of all the peoples who exist under the Russian Eagle. All the day and most of the night they hunt the city up and down for copecks. The daily task of each is to obtain twopence—a penny for a pound of black bread, a penny for a bed in a night-house. They just about manage this, sometimes getting a little more, sometimes a little less—if in luck, the extra farthings go in vodka. Midwinter is their worst time. The cold is most intense then; the number of beggars increases, while other people keep within doors; the struggle for the necessary eight copecks becomes hardest. Last December, in 50deg. of frost, when the east wind cut like a knife and even the hands of the town clocks were frozen, the beggars were frantic and desperate; hundreds died every night. The beggars in the streets were so fierce and menacing that people were afraid to go out after dusk; the chance of starvation and death had made wolves of the melancholy, lifeless-looking ragamuffins that one was accustomed to see. If ever there is a revolution, it will be in some dark December month, when the whole of this emaciated, famished army will fling its weight into a riot. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the authorities are very active in midwinter, arresting and imprisoning beggars in great numbers. Thousands of beggars are examined by the police, and, when found to be natives of other cities, they are expelled. The night-houses, some of the most fearsome dens in the city, are surprised by the

gendarmes at two in the morning, and a crowd of sleepy beggars find themselves in the road marching through the snow to the police-station. Despite all imprisonments and expulsions, however, it is estimated that in the calmest time of the winter there are no less than 50,000 beggars on the streets. The last thing the authorities would wish to do would be to remove the beggars altogether. The beggar is a holy institution for the benefit of the rich; he keeps down the rate of wages in the factories; he is a pillar of the Church, for he continually suggests charity; he is necessary to the Secret Police; where else could they hide their spies? He is, in short, part of Holy Russia.

The beggars have the most extraordinary licence, and think nothing of walking in at the back door and staring at you for a quarter of an hour. It is this licensed insolence that makes him such a terror to the nervous Russian, who always considers himself watched by spies. How shall the housekeeper know what to do if he maltreats the beggar and turns him out? He may find that

he has been ill-treating an agent of the police, and will, consequently, suffer for it. Yet, despite the continuous outcry against the beggars, there are even many reformers who defend them. The quaintest arguments are brought forward in defence. For instance, it is urged that the beggars are a natural check on national indulgence, for the places most haunted by them are the steps of public-houses, tobacconists' shops and the exit doors of theatres; at these places people who are spending their money in luxuries are most likely to be pricked in conscience at the sight of a person lacking the necessities of life. Religious people, too, regard the beggars as an everlasting fulfilment of the promise, "The poor ye have with you always." So much for the opinion held by other people. What do the beggars think of themselves? Are they happy? The answer must be that, except in times of great stress, the beggar considers himself a happy mortal. After all, half of them are country tramps, Russian vagrants who all the summer wandered from estate to estate, past country-side and province, working at what they could, drinking at village taverns, sleeping in haylofts, waking with the dawn; tramping, working, drinking, jolly fellows. When the



Ward Muir.

CURLING IN THE ENGADINE.

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autumn comes wandering is over; the winter freezes everything where it is. The country work is finished, the fields have had their turn, the factory now enforces its claims. The towns are immediately crowded with tramps and labourers seeking employment for the winter. The employers of labour take what they want and the rest have to beg or starve. The remainder submit to their lot cheerfully. They are generally robust, healthy men and women; they take beggary easily, and generally get through the winter without excessive hardship. They are good-humoured and cheeky, and exchange light conversation with the passers-by. One comes up to you and says, "A copeck, dear count!" You reply, "Haven't got one, your Majesty." But what of the other beggars, the real year-in-year-out city beggars—what is their life to them? It is difficult to answer, they are such a miscellaneous collection of people. Between the desperate ruffian who only comes out at night and the amorphous remnant

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of a man who lies at the church door, there are so many different types. All of them are finished beggars, studiously mournful, and each with a carefully worked-up tale of woe. "I was a soldier at the Turkish War and astonished three generals by my bravery, but now devil a penny will my country give me to keep my old bones together. I've had no bread all day, not a farthing to get into the night-house; I shall freeze, oh Go!! I shall freeze!" and so forth. The words of the complaint are varied to suit the possible susceptibilities of the passer-by. These town beggars understand what they are about and work methodically. They even go into partnerships, and it is amusing to see three of them sharing one cigarette, taking a puff all round. They are generally responsible for the child beggars, who so much more easily gain the pity of

women, the imp-like beggar children who play pitch-and-toss with their copecks and who are for ever getting about one's legs in the crowded thoroughfares. There is no doubt that many of these are in the clutches of Russian Fagins who teach them, fit them out with sham complaints and send them into the city for copecks and live on the money brought in. So they live, these town beggars, and they must be considered rather as beggars than as anything else. They do not long for the honest workman's life; they would not take it if they had an opportunity; it is not their way. They are not men, they are beggars. To leave beggary would be to leave their comrades, to become a mark of scorn and a laughing-stock at each new turn in life, for it would be easier to escape the light of day than the recognition of their old companions on crutches.

THE HEDGER.

THERE are two industries of the country which seem to be falling sadly into abeyance—thatching and hedging. For thatch, if there be no thatcher, we may use another mode of roofing, almost certainly less pleasing, but still effective; but the loss of the hedger is one which can hardly be repaired. To fence our land universally by railing, instead of dividing fields by hedges, would be expensive in the process and hideous in the result. Yet for want of the skilful hedger we see many hedges going to waste, and it is not at all certain that a little knowledge is not more dangerous than none. We have in mind as we write this the sad vision of a hedge, once a very pleasing confusion of thick growth, which is now wasted to nothing but dead bones—bare, brittle sticks—just because the billhook-wielder who took it in charge had been told that the right way of dealing with a hedge was to slash through three-quarters of the upright saplings, and so layer them down diagonally. But he had not learnt, by the tradition which used to be handed down from father to son, that there was a certain age of the sapling at which this could be done, and that it could not be done later with any safety for the life of the branch; nor had he learnt that it was necessary to use a nice discretion as to the extent and depth of his slash. The result was, and is, that most of the poor boughs on which he mis-spent his efforts have responded by yielding up their sap, and the flourishing hedge is turned into a criss-cross pattern of dead limbs, with an occasional crutch here and there in shape of a bar set across to help it in the task of keeping out sheep and cattle for which its growth has proved too feeble. That is a sad sight, and it is all because our agricultural population are ashamed to be no better than their

fathers. As a consequence, some details of agriculture and things pertaining to it are less satisfactory than when our fathers dealt with them.

It is a little remarkable, and it is altogether to be regretted, that among that excellent list of leaflets published by the Board of Agriculture, we do not anywhere find one on the processes of hedging. There is one, on hedge timber, which just touches the fringe of this subject, but does not deal with it thoroughly. The best exponents of hedgework in the country now are the railway companies, obliged as they are to have their fences sound. How is it that the American formula runs, "Horse-high, hog-proof and rabbit-tight"? that is to say, of a height that a horse will not jump, of a thick solidity through which a hog will not force its way, and without sufficient space or hole in it to allow the passage of a rabbit. The last is a quality which we hardly demand in this country, even of the hedges which fence our railway lines. The "rabbit" which the American fence designs to keep out is the larger "jack-rabbit"—really a hare—of the States. He is a great scourge to agriculture, and his exclusion is important. For the rest, these railway fences have to be much as those of the States. Cattle and pigs are to be kept off the line; therefore the railway hedges give the best object-lesson we can have of their proper management. All the railway hedges are not layered. Some are hedges of quick, simply clipped so as to grow densely; but layering, properly done, and done when the hedge saplings are of the right age for the process, is the manner in general use, the most economical and the best in every way for all kinds of hedge growth. It is layering on which the old hedger in our illustrations is engaged. A good many of these



W. Selfe.

AN ARTIST WITH THE BILLHOOK.

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sapling growths, springing right up from the stools, he will cut off altogether, and they will be of much use on the farm for one service or another. Then others he will back half, or more than half, through, seeing that he leave a sufficient section of the bark, which acts as a conductor or aqueduct for the sap between its own substance and that of the solid wood. This keeps life in the branch. Then he will lay the branch along, diagonally, and it will grow and send out side growths, strengthening the hedge, in this more or less horizontal position. In and out of these layers, like the more solid strands of a piece of basket-work, he will weave other living growth of the hedge, and so the whole thing will weld together, "horse-high, hog-proof" and all it should be. It will also have a good deal of permanence, once done, and the uprights will be ready for cutting again about the same year as the layering may be repeated.

It is rather picturesque work, and the hedger is a rather picturesque figure, with just that suggestion about him of pathos which is associated with the representative of a trade of which he is among the few surviving followers. He has generally a fair store of legend in his head, and since his profession has taken him to the hedgerows which bound roads, and to the sides of fields where the passer-by goes, rather than, like the ploughman, down the desolate and lonely centres, he will often be found to have fallen into a habit of loquacity rare among agricultural folk. He may tell you things. Most of the rest of the labourers, knowing the things equally well, will only stare at you in unresponsive silence. The hedger often has the narrative gift.

A HILL FOX.

It is not a fashionable, nor yet a big field, that meets the South Oatshire Hounds in their Saturday country, which is always in the hills; for of the large territory hunted over by this famous pack, a good part of it is grassy hills and heathery moorland, the home of real wild foxes. The farms in this part are entirely grazing, and, on an average, are from 2,000 acres to 3,000 acres in extent. The fences are nearly all stone walls, but now and again is encountered, unfortunately, a wire fence; but these are, at least, honest and visible, and consist of five or six strands of plain wire running over hill and dale, with a gate about every mile, so to one who knows the country they are of little hindrance. These wild moors always carry a scent, and hounds here can, and often do, beat horses. Hounds this morning are advertised to meet at the little village of Westerhope, and as eleven o'clock draws near a few horsemen begin to assemble in the one and only street of the village. They are nearly all hill farmers, men of substance who count their sheep by the hundreds, and whose holdings are seldom less than 2,000 acres. These are men of the old Border breed, who know the hills with the intimate knowledge of Sir William of Deloraine of pious memory. In a few more minutes hounds arrive in charge of Soames the huntsman and the two whips, and with them are the Master, Lord Coverdale, and about twenty others.

It is a clear day in February. Not much time is wasted at the meet, for the days are still short and hounds are a long way from home, so the Master tells Soames to go to Windylaws Covert, and soon the whole field is in motion. As they trot slowly on at a hound's jog, Lord Coverdale says to Mr. Bob Robertson, a red-faced, jovial-looking sportsman in a low-crowned hat, who is riding a thorough-bred bay mare that looks like galloping all over, and who is the occupier of the farm on which Windylaws Covert is situated: "Hope you've got a fox for us, Mr. Robertson?" "Well, my lord, I hope so! I saw him two nights ago, but foxes wander a lot this time of year; however, the covert's been kept nice and quiet, so I think he should be at home." "Windylaws nearly always holds a fox," continues his lordship. "It's very seldom I have seen it drawn blank." "Oh! there's always foxes about, I know, for I provide them with turkeys and such-like; my missus whines grumbles, but I just tell her to set a few extra eggs to make up." By this time the covert, which is a long irregular parallelogram running east and west and having a southerly exposure, is reached; the bottom end consists of Scotch fir and spruce of a good age, while the upper side is a much younger growth of the same trees, with an undergrowth of whins, heather and broom. Trotting to the



J. Reeve.

ONE OF THE OLD SORT.

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west end, so as to draw up wind, Soames waves his hand to the bitches, cheers, "Huic to covert all on ye!" and the pack crash through the fence and are soon out of sight in the undergrowth. Meanwhile, Will, the first whip, has got away to the far end, and, sitting motionless at a spot which commands the eastern boundary, where he can see without being seen, lies in wait ready to holloa away the fox should he break at this point. Harry, the second whip, is on the opposite side watching the southern extremity, while the field are marshalled at the north-west corner. Soames pops over a small rail into the covert, and rides up the middle of it, while the hounds quest and try on either side.

For some few minutes there is silence; the bitches rapidly draw through the older portion of the wood, where the undergrowth is not so thick, and consists principally of dead bracken. As they approach the upper portion of the covert, which is of much younger timber, Soames sees one or two of the leading hounds apparently feathering on a line; Barbara, Dextrous and Destiny have their bristles up, and their sterns are lashing from side to side as they jump into the thicker underwood. Presently a whimper; then, again, a note, low, but confident, and Soames holloas: "Huic to Barbara! huic! huic!" Scarcely has the cheer left his throat when Dextrous and Destiny also speak to the line, and the rest of the pack, scoring to cry, make the glades clang and reverberate again with the sweetest music that earth holds. Horses prick up their ears as they hear the "tow row row" of hounds peeling through the clear air; the old hunters quiver with excitement, while the younger horses would fain buck, dance and rear in their eagerness to join in the enthralling sport. Men, their blood on fire with the music, press their hats down on their heads, gather up their reins and prepare for a start as the maddening chimes rise and fall, and the bitches, with their silvery notes, swing round the covert. The fox gains some yards as, making a cunning double, he slips back up the covert, and most of the eager ladies flash over the line; but Dextrous points out the way of him to her thrusting sisters, and Master Reynard, who has by this time realised that he will have to put his best leg foremost, leaves the east end of the covert, seen only by Will, who has kept his eyes glued on the boundary fence. That official watches him clear away, and

then, putting his finger to his ear, screams "Go-o-one awa-a-ay, awa-a-a-ay!" each note of his beautiful voice pealing and echoing clearer and clearer, like the whistle of a locomotive. The field gallops up the side of the covert. The music of the hounds crashes and redoubles as they strain every nerve and fly to the holloa. Soames jumps a low wall out of covert, blows a few notes on his horn and goes on with the leading hounds. Will tells them away, and, holloaing to Harry, who has just come round the corner of the covert, "A couple short!" follows the tail hounds. Meantime, the field has reached the end of the covert, and every man gets a good start. Lord Coverdale, Bob Robertson, Chester, Lascelles and all the flower of the Hunt are settling down in their places, for it is a hill fox that is in front of them, there is a breast-high scent and the bitches are running at a pace that only the best condition in England can live with. There is to-day little fear of anyone over-riding hounds. Abigail and Heedless, the couple that were momentarily left, fling over the stone wall and, threading their way through the horses, by super-canine exertions catch up their flying sisters, to the delight of Harry, whose heart is in the sport and who can now come on with a clear conscience. A stone wall, 4ft. 6in. if it is an inch, is the first obstacle; but the beauty of this class of fence is that there is invariably a sound take off and a sound landing, and the gluttons of the Hunt sail at it as if it were a sheep-hurdle. The bitches drive across a grassy slope and climb a slight rise, which, though it does not look much, gives horses a couple of miles against the collar, and hounds draw slightly away from the leading horsemen, who are now Soames, Will, the Master, Robertson, Chester and Lascelles, while a very little way behind come some dozen more who are riding with judgment and determination. Having reached the highest point of the rise, another stone wall has to be negotiated. Soames is leading, and as his good grey throws it behind, it is evident that there is a bit of a drop on the other side. Sure enough the ground is fully 2ft. lower on the landing than it is on the take-off side, and it is apparent that it is a place at which to sit well back. The chase now leads down a gentle slope of sound galloping turf that enables horses to get their second wind and their riders to look about them. They are running through a real wild country by now, not a sign of human habitation is to be seen; but the pace does not permit of any close study of the view, for the bitches are still running with bloodthirsty intent, as if they were tied to their fox. At the bottom of the slope is the Wharley Water, a small hill burn plashing and rippling over its pebbly bed; through it go the hounds—and splashing after them come the horses, as it is quite shallow, and there is no occasion to jump. Another stone wall running down to the burn edge bars the way, and this proves fatal to Chester, whose horse is not in the best of condition, and who has been rather too much hustled along by that hard-riding young officer. He hits the coping-stone, and although the wall is built of loose stones and crumbles with the impact, the beaten horse comes head over heels, and Captain Chester's chance of seeing the end is out. Hounds still carry on without a sign of a check, and although they have

been going for some forty minutes and Soames casts many a glance ahead, there is no view of that good fox that is leading them such a merry dance. "He's running us clean out of our country!" says the Master to Robertson, who is alongside him at the time. "He is that—he's pointing for Middlesdale," replies the farmer, as he leans forward over the lathering neck of his favourite hunter. Suddenly he pulls to the right. "Mind the moss!" holloas he, pointing to a greenish, boggy-looking place which the hounds are crossing, and which even gives a little to their comparatively light weight. The few who are now with hounds skirt the deep place, and presently before their eyes appears a wire fence stretching right across the hills, through which the bitches are just struggling. "This way!" shouts Robertson, and guides the field to a gate, where they get through; but this detour has enabled the hounds to draw about 400yds. ahead. Now Soames, to his amazement, hears the cry of hounds on his right, and down from a steep hill, a continuation of the mountain we have already mentioned, come some twenty couple of strange hounds, who join in the cry and run with the bitches. After them come two men galloping down the mountain-side as only hill-born men and hill-born horses can negotiate a steep slope, and as they join forces the mystery is explained. The Middlesdale hounds, who hunt these remote parts, have been out at exercise, and have broken away from their huntsman and joined in. There are now some forty couple of hounds running the line with never a check; the scent is still breast high, and it is a wonder that any fox born of vixen can stand before hounds at such a pace and for so long. However, the end is coming; hounds run across a heathery moor which is soft in places and plentifully furnished with peat bags, and mossy spots that would engulf a horse were he to get in, and it behoves every man to ride carefully; but the few that are still with hounds—Lord Coverdale, Soames, Lascelles, Bob Robertson, Will, Harry and three more farmers, besides the Middlesdale huntsman and whip—are all men who know a hill country, and they can be trusted to take care of themselves. Suddenly the pack spread out, and up go most of their heads; but Barbara, Dextrous, Abigail and Fearless, with three couple of the newcomers, mark the fox to earth. Another moment, and the united packs are "tow-rowing" and "wow-wow-ing" round the entrance to the drain in which this grand old hill fox has found sanctuary. "Who-whoop! who-whoop! Gone to ground!" holloas Soames; and then bursts out with: "Too bad! If hounds ever deserved a fox, they deserved this one." "Never mind," says the Master; "real good fox; will give us a run again"; adding, to the huntsman of the Middlesdale: "Hope you will hunt him back into our country." The few who have seen this grand run jump off, slack their girths and turn their horses' heads to the breeze, while Soames and the Middlesdale huntsman call off their respective hounds, and presently all go their ways homeward, with the memory of a real good hill fox that will remain green for the rest of their lives.

B. W.

NESTING-BOXES FOR BIRDS.

A CORRESPONDENT in the issue of COUNTRY LIFE of February 1st tells how she put up a nesting-box for the tomtits in her garden, and then "furnished it inside and out with cocoanuts, hoping thereby to attract the birds to its desirabilities as a home," whereupon the box was promptly taken possession of, not by titmice, but by mice, which is precisely what might have been expected to happen and what ordinarily does happen. There are several rules to be observed in the placing of nesting-boxes for birds, but none of them is more important than that no food must be put in or about the box; nor must it be erected in the immediate vicinity of a bird-table. To do the latter is simply to rob the possible occupants of the one thing which they most desire in a nesting site. A tit does not wish to have its home among the continual scufflings, the comings and goings, of other birds; and a nesting-box in the immediate neighbourhood of a bird-table is certain to be continually haunted and raided by sparrows. To put food in or about a box is even worse, for, again, it merely serves to attract other birds and, which are much worse, mice and rats. When once a nesting-box is made attractive

and accessible to these animals, it becomes impossible as a home for small birds. The latter will know better than to

attempt to make a home there, while if they do attempt it they will have little chance of being able to rear their young. Another common mistake is to put perches or ladders, or other aids to ingress to the hole, for the convenience of the birds. These, again, may be a convenience to rats and mice; and they will almost certainly become a resting-place for sparrows and a vantage-ground whence those marauding little fowl will harry the lives of the rightful tenants of the abode. A bird which habitually builds in holes in trees or walls needs no steps up to its front door. It will fly straight to the hole and either hang on the edge for a few moments to survey its surroundings before stepping inside, or it will simply pass through, so far as the human eye can see, like a stone, without touching the entrance at all. The more difficult of access the entrance is made to all creatures, except the birds for which the box is intended, the better. As for the tits, one need have no fear of its being too difficult for them. Equally mistaken is the common adaptation of human ideas of fitness to the selection of the site

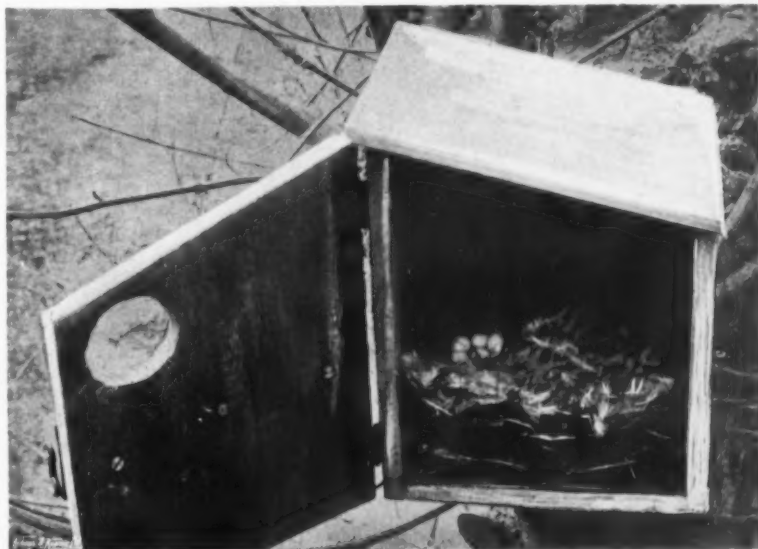


SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

for the box. The inexperienced person is likely to hunt for nice sheltered spots in the middle of a bush or among the small twigs of trees, neither of which positions is in the least what a bird desires. The chances are that any such location will again be easily accessible to small four-footed enemies, and it must be remembered that it is these, as well as other egg-stealing species of birds, against which the small birds need protection. When a bird's instinct, which now guides it in the choice of a nesting site, was shaped, it is probable that the depredations of human beings were not a factor worth considering. Except only incidentally (and perhaps in the case of what may be called half-domesticated kinds) a bird's concealment of its nest has no relation to human beings at all, but is designed solely for protection against the two classes of enemy that have been mentioned. As for the latter (namely, egg-stealing birds), the way to guard the occupants of a nesting-box against them is by making the hole of the box just sufficiently large to admit the particular tenants, and not one quarter of an inch larger. The size of the box itself is more or less a matter of indifference, as the birds will either fill up the whole area of the floor with nesting material, or they will build in one corner if the space is too large. Still, it will probably save them some trouble, and add to their comfort, if the interior be not too roomy. Six or seven inches square is a good average size for all the smaller birds, though an old confectioner's chocolate box is often occupied with seeming readiness. For the entrance-hole 1½ in. in diameter is large enough for the smaller tits, and 1½ in. suffices for the larger tits, robins, nuthatches (though these will block up the hole to suit themselves), flycatchers, etc. To make the entrances larger is only to invite spoliation.

To protect the nest from the assaults of four-footed robbers, the best plan is to affix the box to the bare side of a tree trunk or the face of a wall. It may look ludicrously conspicuous to human eyes, but, as has been said, that does not matter. The birds will not consider that a drawback when weighed against immunity from the ravages of their natural enemies. Nor need it be at all high up; from 5ft. to 8ft. from the ground is a good height, and there is an obvious convenience in having it so low that one can lift the lid and look in without having recourse to a stool or step-ladder in the process. To make assurance of safety doubly sure, when the box is near the top of a wall, an overhanging roof, or porch, may be fixed above it so that no animal can climb down to it from above; while, when fastened to a tree trunk, a strip of tin or of sheet iron nailed round the tree immediately below the box will prevent even a squirrel from climbing up to it. Personally, I have a notion that it is a kindness to place the box with its entrance-hole away from the direction of the cold winds, *i.e.*, facing either west or south,

sites. This is sufficiently shown by the readiness with which they seize upon the most seemingly unnatural places—letter-boxes, standards of street-lamps, old cans, broken spouts, where the rain washes the nest away, and pump nozzles, where a similar catastrophe is even more certain, in the corners of window-casings and even inside rooms themselves, among books on bookshelves or behind picture-frames. Nor is it



J. E. Hailstone. BLUE TIT'S NEST AND EGGS.

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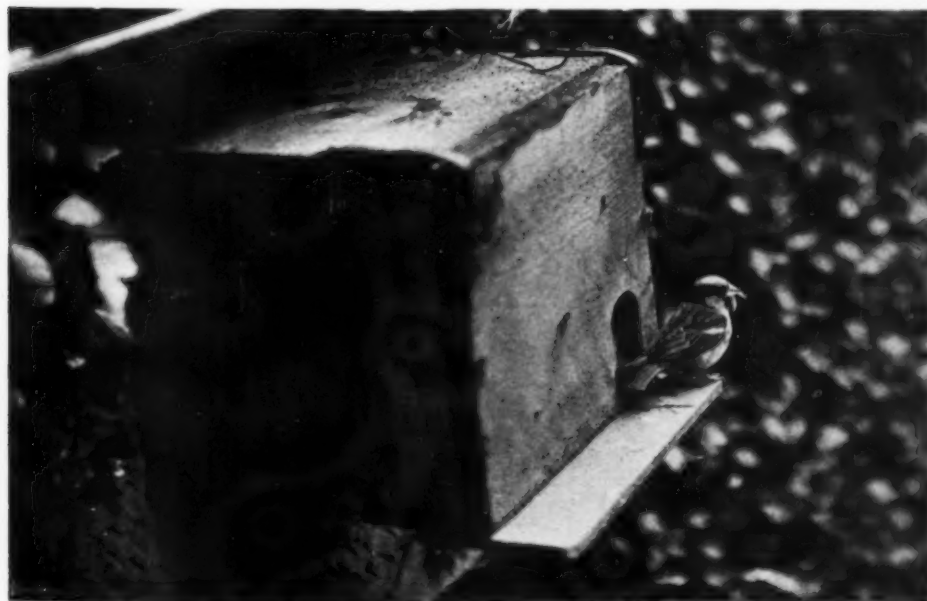
necessary to think that, because you have few birds in your garden, nesting-boxes will be of no avail. You probably have few birds, precisely because there are so few satisfactory places in which they can build. Provide the places and the birds will come.

And one of the great pleasures of having nesting-boxes occupied is the absurd tameness of the occupants. After a few experiences they do not in the least resent your inspection of their nurseries. Tits often insist on being lifted off the nest by hand before they will allow you to see what is underneath them. They will peck your fingers ferociously in the process, and, till you go away, will sit on a neighbouring twig and call you frightful names; but neither the names nor the peckings hurt. As soon as you prepare to withdraw they will snuggle down upon the nest again, and at your next appearance will take food from your fingers without malice. It has been assumed so far that the nesting-box will be made of wood,

which is the most readily available material and the most commonly used—just a square or oblong box with a round hole, placed above the centre for preference, and a hinged lid or side. The hinged lid is the more convenient for yourself and for the birds, and it is better if it slopes, to shed the wet, and projects beyond the sides, so that the moisture cannot trickle in. It is customary to paint the boxes green, though this I imagine to be more for the gratification of our own æsthetic sense than for any pleasure that it gives to the birds, who probably are entirely indifferent to the colour of the outside of the boxes. Besides wood they are also made of earthenware, and of perforated zinc plastered with mortar. We have so far spoken only of preparing homes for the smaller birds, of which tits, robins, flycatchers, nuthatches and redstarts are the most easily procurable tenants, in about the order named. Starlings take to nesting-boxes readily enough; indeed, it is to keep out starlings, almost as much as sparrows, that it is wise to have the hole no larger than is needed. Of larger or rarer birds

which can be induced to take up their homes in these artificial dwelling-places, jackdaws, wrynecks, owls and kestrels have all been successfully catered for. But the great majority of people will necessarily think first of the small birds, the friendly little visitors to our orchards and shrubberies, which need but small advances on our part to become our willing and most charming pensioners.

H. P. R.

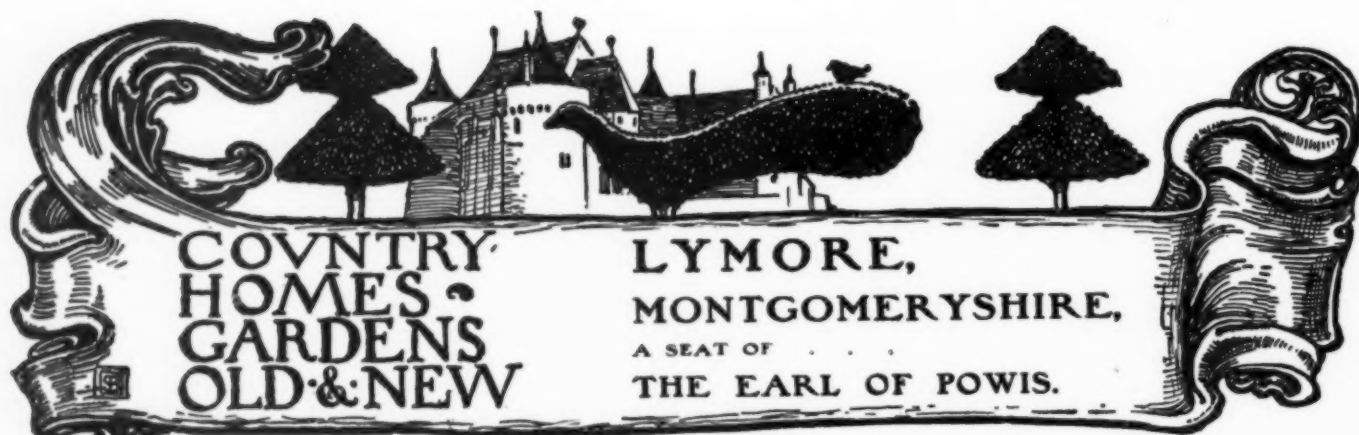


C. Relâ, Wislaw, N.B.

A SMALL HOLDER.

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though this may be a mere fad and only the application of human ideas to creatures whose own notions may be vastly different. A nesting-box thus fixed, offering reasonable security from the raids of enemies, and removed from any such inconveniences as the public-house brawlings which go on about a bird-table, is likely to be promptly occupied, for it is evident that birds have great difficulty in finding an abundance of good natural nesting



SINCE Charles II.'s time Lymore has been the chief, but often neglected, seat of the Montgomery and Chirbury estate which a branch of the Herbert family entered upon when Henry VIII. was king. The Herberts did not come into particular prominence until the middle of the fifteenth century, when William Herbert was possessed of the lordship of Raglan, and was one of the most valiant supporters of Edward IV., who rewarded him with the Earldom of Pembroke in 1468. It brought him no luck, for the following year he suffered defeat and capture at the hands of the revolted Nevilles, and he and his brother, Sir Richard, were promptly executed by the commander of the victorious party, Sir John Conyers, who was the ancestor of the present Countess of Powis, while the present Earl is descended from the man he slew. This Sir Richard was "an Anakim in stature," and at this last fight of his is said to have passed and repassed through the enemy's ranks, pole-axe in hand, and killed 140 of their number without receiving mortal wounds. From him came another Sir Richard, who, half a century later, suppressed a Montgomeryshire rising, and received from the Crown the grant of Montgomery Castle and its dependencies. Here, in the Conqueror's reign, one Baldwyn seems to have established and fortified himself. But the Welsh won it back,

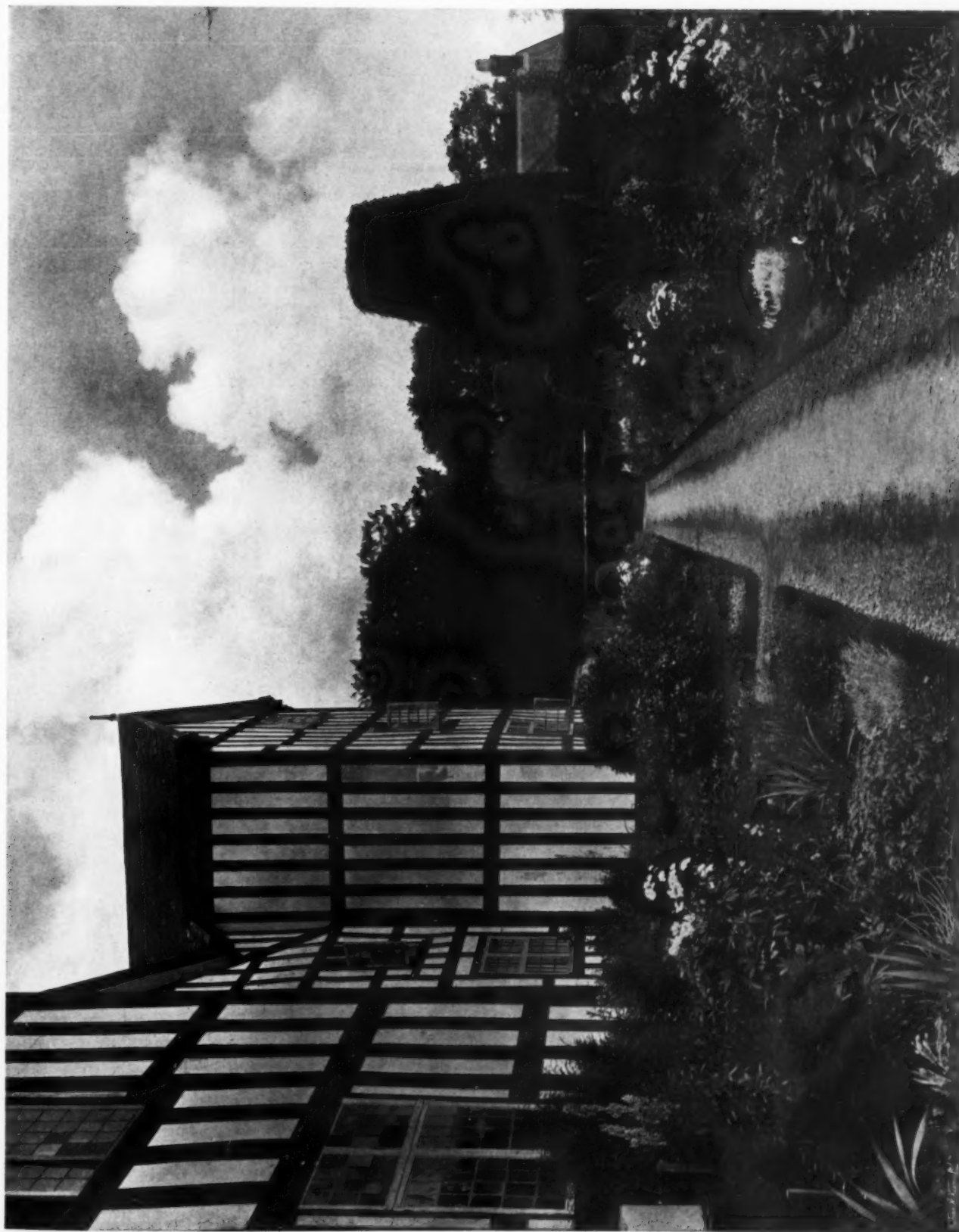
so that Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, when he invaded Powysland in 1092, had to recapture it, before he built it in stronger fashion and gave it his own Norman place name. From that time till the date of its destruction in 1649 it played a frequent and important part in the history of the Marches of Wales, and even in its last days was considered not merely a place of strength, but also a noble habitation. In Montgomery Castle, then, Sir Richard housed himself, and was followed by his son Edward, who, however, later on in life, seems to have seen the advantage of a more domestic residence, and therefore built—not, they say, where the house of Lymore stands, but nearer to town and castle—the Black Hall, "a low building of great capacity," and there he entertained his friends in such hospitable fashion as to have "a very long table twice covered every meal with the best meats that could be gotten." In fact, so capacious and well stocked was his larder known ever to be that anyone flushing wildfowl or partridge was wont to shout after them: "Fly where thou wilt, thou wilt light at Black Hall." He took his share in public life and office, serving as sheriff and knight of the shire, and repressing Welsh lawlessness with a strong hand. He died at the ripe age of eighty in 1593, and three years later his son, Sir Richard, followed him into the Lymore chapel of Montgomery Church,



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ENTRANCE FRONT WITH THE LATE GABLES.

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EAST END OF SOUTH WALK.

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SOUTH FRONT.

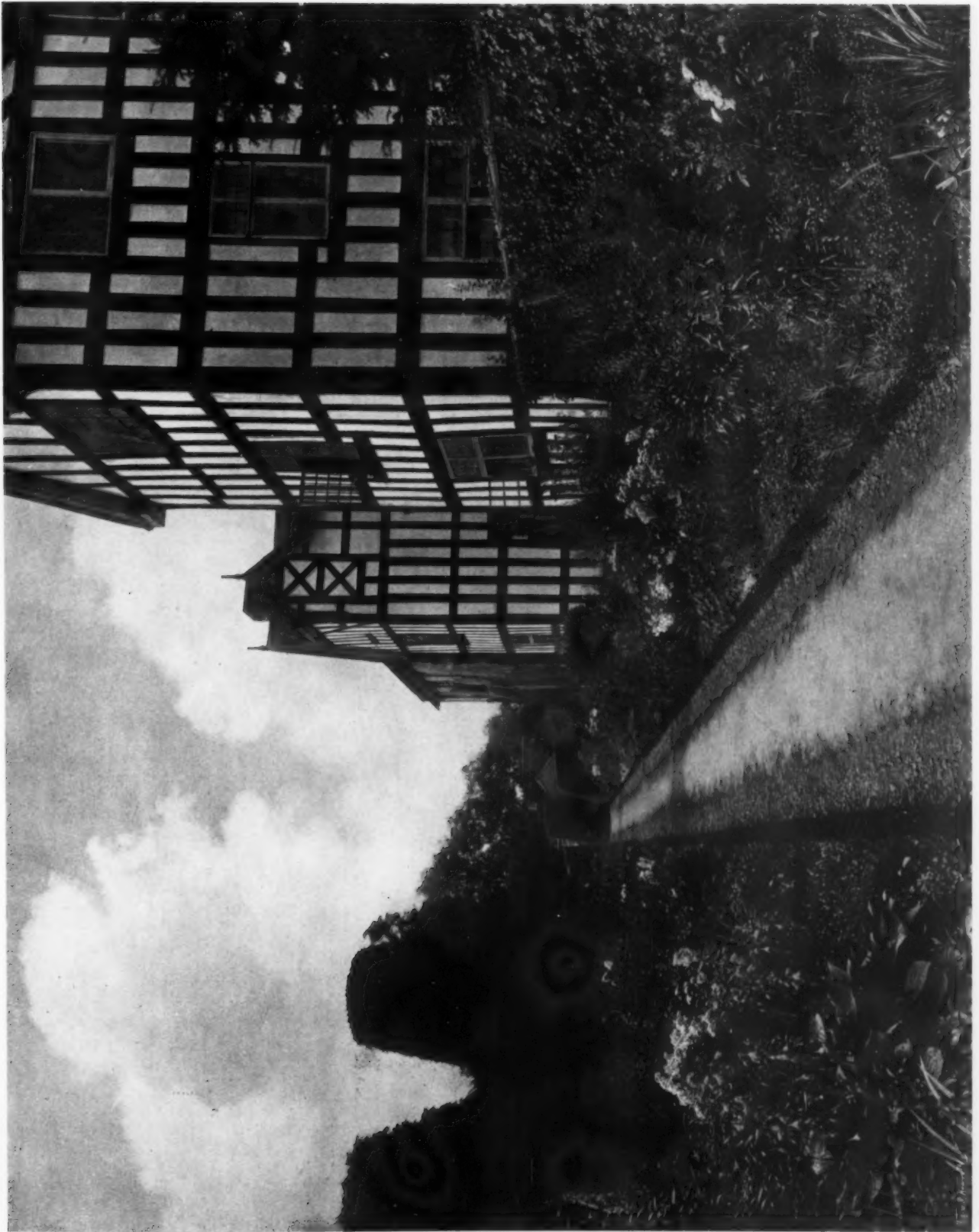
"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE OLD GARDEN.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

SOUTH GARDEN WALK.

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where his stately monument survives. He had married the daughter of Sir Thomas Newport of High Ercall, and by her had ten children, of whom the eldest, who became the most famous of seven distinguished brothers, was thirteen years of age when he succeeded his father. The whole family, of whom the youngest was George Herbert the poet, were well and intelligently educated by the widow, a most capable and intellectual woman. When her eldest son was seventeen she married him to his cousin Mary, aged twenty-one, who was only to inherit her father's estate of St. Julians in Monmouthshire on the condition of marrying a Herbert. This event was by no means allowed to interfere with his education, and wife and mother lived with him at Oxford. No wonder, then, that when he had finished with the University he began to crave for liberty and adventure, and that when he was twenty-seven this feeling overcame his wife's objections and took him abroad, where, if we are to believe his autobiography, he proved himself a Don Quixote with a dash of the Don Juan. After two years he returned to Montgomery and to his wife, but soon tired of home life, and spent most of the ensuing years fighting in the Low Countries and extending his travels to Italy. He



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THE PORCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

earned position and reputation and became Ambassador to France in 1619. His fiery temper occasionally led to somewhat undiplomatic situations, and his love of magnificence involved his private fortune to the extent of £60,000. On his return, in 1624, he found himself out of favour, and though he was grudgingly given a peerage, he was allowed no further part in public affairs, and, devoting himself to philosophy and history, wrote "De Veritate" and "Henry VIII." The Civil Wars found him broken in health and more interested in the safety of his books and papers than of his King. The Castle, and not Black Hall, was his home; but its possession now, as at all previous disturbed times, was a matter of importance to the contending parties, and his proposed neutrality pleased no one. Prince Rupert summoned him to Shrewsbury in August, 1644, but though "he had the ambition to kiss his most valorous and princely hands, yet, because he was newly entered into a course of physic," he begged to be excused. Next month the Parliamentary leader, Sir Thomas Middleton, took a more decided line. He marched suddenly up with a strong force, seized the outworks of the carelessly equipped and defended fortress, and so commanded the entrance. Lord Herbert at once surrendered on the terms that he should continue in possession, and that his library was to be respected by the soldiers. It was not, however, here, but at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, that he died, in 1648, and as his son had not joined his father in sitting on the fence, but had fought for the King, he was heavily fined and the castle was destroyed. The first Lord Herbert of Chirbury's character and abilities made him a prominent man in his own time, and as one of our very first autobiographers he has lived in history as a familiar and well-known figure. Childlike vanity was his leading characteristic. He loved to make himself out a gay, wicked and handsome Lothario, whereas, really, he was a studious man of wide attainments and an ingenious theorist in the domain of religion and philosophy. His son died during the Commonwealth period, and the Restoration found his grandson houseless, as the castle had been destroyed by man and Black Hall by fire. It is now that Lymore comes to the front, and a somewhat curious and unusual house it is, if it be the creation of the head of a fairly important family in the reign of Charles II. Mr. T. E. Pryce, in the eighteenth volume of the "Montgomeryshire Collections," tells us that "it was enlarged from a hunting lodge or possibly entirely rebuilt by Edward, third Lord Herbert of Chirbury, in 1675," which probably means that he has been unable to discover any more as to its history than was known in the eighteenth



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RECESS BETWEEN THE WINGS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

GALLERY AND STAIRCASE.

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century by Pennant, who, after mentioning the burning of Black Hall, adds: "The Lodge in Lymore Park at a small distance from the town was enlarged on this occasion; is still kept up and shews a venerable wooden front." The tradition of its enlargement is probably true, but the rebuilding theory can hardly hold. Indeed, Mr. Pryce himself gives it up, for he speaks of hiding-places, odd corners and dark passages communicating with unexpected exits as abounding in the house, and being characteristic of the Civil War period, thus himself assigning an early seventeenth century date to the mass of the fabric. Our illustration of the south front shows a plain but typical example of a country-built timber-framed house such as the long survival of the native Gothic style continued to produce frequently in our principal oak-growing districts all through the reigns of Elizabeth and James. But the style had died out, except for the humble purposes of the village carpenter, by the year 1675, to which Mr. Pryce attributes the building of Lymore, as one of the gable finials bears a baron's coronet and the initials and date "E. H., 1675." The north-east front, with its three wide, depressed gables, displays a somewhat different spirit, but these are not part of the third lord's house, but the result of a much later alteration. There is still preserved, at Powis Castle, a rent roll of the Lymore Estate, of 1785 date, wherein is "a curious Indian ink drawing of Lymore as it then appeared, showing eight small gables instead of the three large ones now existing." Stepping inside we are confronted by a fine oak staircase of full Elizabethan flavour. The rustication of the newel-posts reminds us of the detail on those at Park Hall, twenty miles further north, near Oswestry. In both cases, also, there is the same lingering of Gothic mouldings in the hand-rail, and the newel finials and the balusters show close kinship, though at Park they are plain, whereas at Lymore they are decorated with "jewel" ornament. Now Park was certainly built by Thomas Powell in Elizabeth's reign, and we doubt the Lymore staircase being much later. If, then, so ample and elaborate a stair is in its original position—as its exact adaptation to the peculiarities of the house's shape and plan proves that it is—we must believe that "The Lodge" was a considerable domicile long before the third lord's time, and that he merely extended it, using the same materials, and so continuing the same style, as regards the outside, but adding much interior work such as prevailed in his own day. The size and disposition of the panelling and the character of the mouldings of chimney-pieces, door, architraves and ceiling cornices, such as they appear in two of our interior views, are fully post-Restoration; but how much of the walling they cover is of the same, and how much of earlier, date is problematical. This much we may say, that as the present main entrance to the north-east, through the arcaded and recessed porch, is in no way of an early type, and as it merely leads us into a long dark corridor, and not straight into the hall, we may certainly believe that this elevation was entirely new built in 1675. On the other hand, the "Great or Burgesses' Hall"—as the old rent-roll survey calls it—must be part of an older building. Though rearranged and repanelled by the third lord, the place of the screens is marked by two columns, and the bricked up access to the buttery is traceable. The withdrawing-room, which opens out of the hall, is of the same redecorated fashion, but is part of the same original building which, probably owing to its greater age and the decay of its timbers, was refaced with brick at a later date. With the exception of these two apartments, the rooms at Lymore are characterised by their



Copyright. POST-RESTORATION PANELLING. "C.L."

large number and small size; they are in ranges opening out of each other, so that they represent, on a modest scale, the post-Restoration fashion of copying the Italian and French system of numerous reception-rooms *en suite*.

Lymore's period of being a chief seat was of short duration. Edward Herbert, who established it on that footing, had no children, and was succeeded in 1678 by his brother Henry as fourth lord, who lived till 1691. Dying childless, the barony was continued to a nephew of the first lord, but ended with the suicide of his son in 1738. The Lymore estate, however, never went to them. Florence Herbert—sister to Edward and Henry—had, after the frequent fashion of this family, married her cousin, Sir Richard Herbert of Dolguog, and their son, Francis of Oakley, was his uncle's heir. Again, in the next generation there is an inter-marriage of Herberts and a concentration of properties, for the owner of Oakley and Lymore wedded the heiress of the last Marquess of Powis, and not only obtained the Powis estates, but likewise an Earl's coronet in 1748. Lack of male heirs, however, seems to have established itself as a chronic condition, and the last Herbert Earl left both the Lymore and Powis Castle estates to his nephew, the son of the second Lord Clive, the latter being created Earl of Powis in 1804.

Thus, throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, Lymore sank more and more into a secondary and seldom-inhabited condition, and on this account it has been preserved to us as one of the old houses that have escaped the revolutionising changes of taste and habit, and yet has been maintained in structural repair. Some years after the rent-roll picture was taken, the roof was clearly in a bad state, and so the multitude of old gables was largely replaced by the present not very satisfactory few. Then also were the ample and spreading offices, seen in the same picture, mostly pulled down.



Copyright.

THE OLD PARLOUR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

They were characteristic of the seventeenth century self-supplying mode of life of a large household; their repair was costly and their maintenance needless for a house scarcely ever, and then only modestly, tenanted, and so the four kitchens were reduced to one, and that the "Little Kitchen" of the old plan. These changes and curtailments, however, have not materially destroyed the original character of the place. There was no desire to spend any unnecessary sum, and so no sashes replaced the mullioned and transomed windows, whose casements retain their excellently-designed fastenings. Nor have the interior fittings been renovated or replaced. Not only has the seventeenth century woodwork, but also its brasswork on the doors, been preserved, and the chased steel key of the state bedroom is an evidence that even in so plain a house as Lymore there was something of that exquisite decorative finish, in matters of detail, which is characteristic of the age of Wren and Grinling Gibbons and of such palaces as Chatsworth and Petworth. The present-day result is charming. The rooms are the adequate setting for such of the old furniture as remains, and which is of the same homely type as the house, many more elaborate pieces having been removed, as there was danger of damage in so deserted a domicile. Our view of the old parlour exactly represents the general feeling of the interior and makes lengthy description unnecessary. There is throughout a sense of the past maintained

sufficiently, but not excessively, for our present pleasure. As in all old timber-framed houses, there has everywhere ceased to be a quite straight line or an exact right angle, for Nature has most engagingly insisted upon modifying man's over-precise geometry, so that every floor waves and every wall leans. A while ago Nature was, perhaps, having a little too much her own way; but now there is just the right neatness to be found in the wholly apt and most pleasing old-fashioned garden, and just the right repair and orderliness in the house. That is almost the only change which a generation has produced, and Mr. Pryce's excellent description of one of the interior scenes, written more than twenty years ago, is still applicable: "The view from the withdrawing-room down the long row of lower apartments is picturesque in the extreme—the wintry sunshine streaming through the lead quarries of the mullioned windows, and casting chequered shadows on the shimmering floor, lights up the panelled walls with a ruddy glow, room after room stretching away into a hazy distance, interrupted here and there by an old chair or chest, or a chance glimpse of a quaint fireplace, shut in at last by the sun-tipped yew tree on the lawn, dimly seen through the distant window overlooking it, forms a rare picture, and, like old wine, one to be lingered over thoughtfully and left with regret." T.

IN THE GARDEN.

THINGS WORTH TRYING IN THE GARDEN.

WE may be quite sure that, as a rule, people are not nearly as enterprising as they might be about the things that they try to grow in their gardens. In a former article we have dwelt on the importance, if a garden is to be furnished to the best advantage, of finding out by first-hand experiment in its own particular soil and aspect what kinds of plants and what varieties of the same plants flourish best in it. We have also insisted that it is no good going on—in the same part of the garden, at all events—trying to grow plants which the soil and aspect have been sufficiently proved not to suit. In course of making the experiments you are likely to be as much astonished as delighted to find what the garden will grow to advantage. Especially should you make trial of things, provided they appeal to your taste for beauty and fitness, which the books or your friends tell you are "much too delicate." They might do in the South of Devon, or Cornwall, or thereabouts, but as for any of the other counties—oh no! To speak from our own experience, thirty miles south of London, and in a position exposed to the south-west strong winds, we have brought up cuttings of several kinds of plants—which we were told were much too delicate for our climate—from the Silly Islands, and they have done perfectly well. We may instance the *Climanthus*, or Lobster-claw plant as it is sometimes called, from the shape of its brilliant red blooms. It not only lives on the west exposure of the house, where the heavy winds blow on it, but thrives and grows very fast, and was in full foliage all through the last winter right on to the end of the second week in January. Then, again, there is the *Buddleia variabilis*, as it is called; but the *variabilis* is, perhaps, more descriptive of its name than of anything else about it, for each book calls it differently from the last. It is the kind which has mauve blooms hanging in racemes, like little Grape bunches, very delicate in hue and graceful in form, and altogether a more beautiful thing than the common *Buddleia globosa* with the yellow ball-like blooms. A shoot of this lovely plant we brought from a garden in the South of Cornwall, and it has done so well (again on a west wall, but not in a very sheltered place; indeed, where a rather chill draught from the north comes through an arch and catches it) that it has beaten the common *Buddleia* planted near it, so that the latter makes comparatively no show at all. It has thrown out long, thick, vigorous branchlets and grown at a great rate. A little cover of Heather is given to its roots in the winter; but it does not look as if it wanted this help. Now, this is frequently described as "delicate," and without some such example as this most gardeners, even in the Southern Counties, except on the mild coast and in the West, would be rather afraid of it. But not only is this *Buddleia* thus vigorous in Sussex, but we know of shoots from the same parent tree growing well and strong as far North as Derbyshire. It is very easily struck from cuttings. It may be noted that both these off-shoots of the Cornish stock had a splendid and vigorous parent; and there is no doubt that this makes a difference, and that a cutting taken from a plant which is known to the gardener who is transplanting the cutting, and known to be a fine specimen itself, is much more likely to take up its new life successfully than one obtained at haphazard.

The beauty of the *Escallonia*, with its bright evergreen foliage and pink blooms, of which hedges are made in Scilly and even in parts of Cornwall and of the Welsh milder coast

districts, is not enough appreciated; and, again, it is likely that a good many gardeners are afraid that it may not be hardy enough for the situations in which they could place it; but we have found it quite strong and able to take care of itself, and have seen it doing well in gardens in a part of Wales where the winters are really very severe and the cold prolonged.

There are probably few gardens in which the *Osmunda regalis* (the Royal Fern) would not do well, if planted in favourable, that is to say, in damp and shady, spots. It grows most freely in rich, mild, moist climates, such as that of the West of England and Ireland, and for that reason is often regarded as delicate. It is not to be said that its beauty is superior to that of other kinds of Ferns which grow everywhere, but it is interesting to have one or two specimens in the garden, and there is no difficulty in raising them from roots. They require no winter shelter.

The list might be prolonged almost indefinitely. There are plants from Japan, from the Himalayas, from very many parts of the globe, which we might grow freely and with great addition to the beauty of gardens if we had but the pluck to try them. A few gardeners, such as Sir Edmund Loder, at Leonardslee, do make the experiment and are repaid. It is true that this particular garden, lying in a glen facing the south, has exceptional chances, being a perfect sun-trap, with shelter from all the bad winds; but it is very certain that experiments of the kind in almost every garden would astonish the gardener by their results and are well worth making. The great maxim is to try for yourself and not to take on trust what your neighbour tells you. What he says may be quite true for him, just over the way; it does not at all follow that it is true for you.

WORK IN THE GARDEN.

THIS is one of the busiest and pleasantest seasons in the garden. Bulbs are breaking through the ground, the Crocuses are already in flower, and the whole garden is awakening to the influence of the spring of the year. Not only are there the Roses to think of, but the borders require setting in order, stirring the soil, removing weeds and making good any blanks through the plants dying. It is at this time, when the hardy perennials are in strong growth after their winter sleep, that they may be most successfully divided for an increase of stock. This is beneficial also to the plants, which, as we have before pointed out, never thrive after the growth has become matted. Michaelmas Daisies and perennial Sunflowers require lifting and dividing once in every three or four years. Sow annual flowers when the soil is in condition; that is, neither too dry nor too moist, and remember the oft-repeated advice, not to sow too thickly. When the seed is sown as if it were Mustard and Cress, it is impossible for the growth to expand; it becomes abortive, and the flowers are scanty. Evergreen shrubs may be transplanted now—see that there is a good ball of soil round the roots, and prune back the Ivy. It may have a bare appearance for a time, but it is not long before the fresh green foliage appears to take the place of the ragged shoots which spoil one of the most useful and beautiful of all creepers or climbers, whichever one is pleased to call the Ivy.

THE GLADIOLUS.

As this is the planting time for the Gladiolus, a few notes on their culture may be useful. It is a corm, that is, a form of bulb, if we may so describe it without offending the botanist, and should be planted about 4 in. deep, in good, rich soil, placing a little silver sand in heavy ground just beneath the base to minimise any chance of decay at this portion. The Gladiolus never seems to have quite gained the affections of the earnest flower gardener, notwithstanding the glorious varieties—we can adequately describe them by no other word—that have been raised by Messrs. Kelway of Langport,

Somerset. Visitors to the principal London and provincial shows in the flowering-time of the *Gladiolus* will recall the splendid spikes, row upon row, shown by this well-known firm. It is impossible in a note to describe the many varieties or hybrids that have been raised of recent years, but not one hybrid is without a distinguishing beauty, not, perhaps, a flaming self scarlet or crimson, as some are, but delicately mixed with colour on a white ground—lavender, softest mauve, tender pink and shades as distinct and beautiful. The scarlet *G. brenchleyensis* must not be forgotten, and, perhaps, is one of the most satisfactory to begin with, having the merit not only of striking colour, but of cheapness. Although it is pleasant to see the flowers close to the eye, it is in groups and masses that the finer effect of the colouring is gained, and *Brenchleyensis* we always admire in the Royal Gardens, Kew, where in the distance it seems as if tongues of fire were shooting from the soil. It is not, of course, in every garden that this is possible, but wherever it is so plant freely the finer varieties and tend them lovingly. About 1ft. to 18in. is a satisfactory distance to plant the corms, and with a groundwork of Yellow Queen *Antirrhinum*—we are pre-suming *Brenchleyensis* is the *Gladiolus* to be used—the effect is very beautiful. While writing of this flower, *Galtonia* or *Hyacinthus candicans* occurs to mind, it is a bulbous flower suggestive of a large *Snowdrop*, and is excellent for grouping. It enjoys a rich soil and should be planted 6in. deep.

THE MOURNING IRIS (*I. SUSIANA*).

The accompanying illustration represents a flower and growth of one of the most fascinating of the Irises—*I. susiana*—"that Flower de luce," says



C. Elliott.

THE MOURNING IRIS.

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Parkinson, "which for his excellent beauty and rarity deserveth the first place." The late Sir Michael Foster, the great authority on the group of Irises known as "*Oncocyclus*," to which this kind belongs, mentioned that it seemed to have become known in Western Europe about the middle of the sixteenth century, having been introduced from Constantinople. It very early became a favourite, and seems to have been cultivated with considerable success, for there are few collections of specimens, or of drawings of Irises, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which do not include *I. susiana*. The specimens preserved or figured vary a good deal in size, and Parkinson distinguishes two kinds, the greater and the less, the latter differing from the former in that "the flower is neither so large or faire, nor of so perspicuous marks and spots, nor the colour of that lively (though darke) lustre. These," he continues, "have been sent out of Turke divers times, and it should seem that they had their origin over from about Susia, a chiefe citie of Persia. They have been sent unto us and unto divers others in other parts from Constantinople under the name of *Alaia susiana*, and thereupon it has been called, both of them and us, either *Iris chalcadonica* or *susiana*, and for distinction, major or minor; in English, the Turkie Flower de luce, or the Ginnia Hen Flower de luce, the greater or the lesser." The flower is very large and beautifully coloured—dark grey touched with black, and has a strange fascination. It enjoys a warm, well-drained soil, sunshine and shelter to preserve the flowers as much as possible from wind and rain. Spring is a very good time to plant it.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A BEAUTIFUL MIMOSA.

SIR,—I am sending a few sprays of *Acacia cultriformis*; the plant is now in full beauty, covering a space of 20ft. by about 14ft. Some of the sprays are over 3ft. in length. It is a great addition to the conservatory, hanging, as it does, from the roof. Plant it out and severely prune the growths.—G., Great Berkhamstead.

[We were very pleased to see the graceful honey-scented sprays of this somewhat uncommon Wattle Tree or Mimosa, which was introduced into this country in 1820. Those who have large conservatories cannot plant a more beautiful group than this, which contains many species and varieties, one of the tallest and perhaps most popular being *A. dealbata*, a "Mimosa" that has attained huge dimensions in the great temperate house at Kew. This is the "Mimosa" of the Mediterranean region, and sent in quantities to London in February and March. Unfortunately, the flowers fade very quickly, but on the trees the fountain of golden yellow against the wealth of dark foliage are quite in keeping with the luxuriant vegetation of Southern gardens.—ED.]

CHRISTMAS ROSES IN POTS.

SIR,—Could you give me instructions how to grow Christmas Roses in pots for next winter? I once saw them grown so—a mass of flowers—and brought indoors. As the plants are impatient of being moved, I have always been shy of trying to grow them in this form. I want to know the size of the pots, when to pot them up, what kind of compost to put them in, and any further points that may help to make it a success; also what kind, if any, is especially good for growing in this manner.—C. D. O.

[We are pleased to answer your letter, as the Christmas Rose is far too little grown in pots for winter decorations; but a start should be made in October, the month to lift the crowns, which are just then at the end of their resting period. Strong crowns can be purchased very cheaply, and by so doing you will be saving the labour of keeping the plants through the summer, when they are dormant. Begin, therefore, in October, and put them into pots or tubs of sufficient size to well hold the roots. The crowns should be just visible above the soil in the pots or tubs, whichever is used, and in filling in the soil the greatest care must be taken not to injure the roots. Water liberally, and then take the plants to a cold frame, where they must remain for a fortnight, at the end of which time the buds will appear. The object is not to force in the usual acceptance of the term, but to allow the plants in the early stages to develop as naturally as possible. When in the condition indicated remove them to a greenhouse, and upon the time when the plants are wanted in flower will depend the degree of heat to be used. In a warm greenhouse the buds will naturally expand more quickly than in one not heated at all. While the buds are developing give plenty of water and an occasional dose of liquid manure. It is also possible to grow the plants entirely in a room, first placing the pots in a cold room, then in a warmer one; the flowers open quite satisfactorily. Soil that one would pot a *Geranium* in is the most suitable; that is, a mixture of loam and leaf-mould. Place a few bits of pot in the bottom of the receptacles, the object of this being to secure a free drainage. *Altifolius* is the most beautiful.—ED.]

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE FORECAST OF SPRING.

THE extraordinarily mild and open weather, which began towards the end of January and continued to the middle of February, brought with it many premature indications of spring. Primroses were to be seen flowering in the woods, gorse was more than usually forward and groundsel bloomed more freely than I ever remember at this time of the year. Partridges paired for the most part in January in the South of England, and thrushes, blackbirds, larks and even yellow-hammers, chaffinches and other familiar wild birds, were to be heard piping their spring notes as if March were here. Many of the early breeders, such as sparrows, starlings and rooks, had begun their nesting operations. It has been noted that worms and moles have this season been displaying activity at a much earlier period than usual. Whether these cheering indications are indeed the foretellers of an unusually early spring, time alone can show. But the vagaries and inconsistency of our climate are such that all these symptoms may mean nothing; we may be, at a day's notice, thrown back into winter once more; the song-birds may have ceased their piping and a spell of snow and frost may have driven the paired partridges back to the covey again. At the rate spring was advancing by the middle of February one might expect to see wheatears and chaffinches with us easily by the last days of the month—at least two or three weeks earlier than the date of their usual appearance in this country. Yet, notwithstanding the allurements of this premature foretaste of spring, one may well doubt whether even these, the earliest migrants, will hasten their appearance. The instincts and the habits of thousands of years are all against such a phenomenon.

THE ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.

One of these fine raptorial was observed in East Sussex late in December last. It was seen near some woodland country on the edge of a large tract of marsh, which exactly corresponds with the description of an old and observant writer on natural history, Selby, who says, "Their favourite haunts are the skirts of forests, in the neighbourhood of a marsh or water." These buzzards are, as late autumnal migrants, probably more common in England than is generally supposed. It is likely that, but for the unceasing warfare waged against rare birds of this kind by keepers and collectors, these raptorial would pretty often remain with us in England throughout the winter, in localities suited to their habits. The odds are much against them, however, and, as a rule, no sooner do they appear than they are pursued and shot. I have not heard that this particular visitor to East Sussex was slain. Possibly it made its escape to warmer and safer regions before it was too late.

ITS HABITAT.

In the high fiefs of Norway the rough-legged buzzard is quite a common bird, and I have watched it in that country in summer with much interest.

Here, as well as in the high uplands of Sweden, these raptorial nest freely; and, notwithstanding the fact that they are among the scheduled birds of prey for which the Norwegian Government offers a reward, they manage to maintain their footing pretty securely. In Russia also this bird is quite common, as well as in Siberia, whence its range extends as far as Kamchatka. It is met with in Alaska, and visits even Northern Japan during the winter season. In Europe its southern migration extends as far as the Mediterranean, where this bird has been identified in various islands. Eastward, the rough-legged buzzard is known to visit Turkestan during winter. Although by no means an uncommon migrant to England during late autumn, and even more frequently identified in the North and East of Scotland, this buzzard occurs very rarely in Ireland, where the sum total of its appearances may almost be numbered on the fingers of two hands. In some seasons this bird appears much more numerous in Britain than in others. The last of its "good years" with us was 1891. The rough-legged buzzard may be pretty easily distinguished from the common buzzard by the fuller feathering of the legs, which extends as far as the toes. It has, too, a bolder and more striking flight.

QUAIL IN WINTER.

In spite of the cold snap which visited us after Christmas, this is to be distinctly classed as a mild winter. One very good test of the general kindness of the weather has been the presence of quail, which have been shot or identified in several parts of England during the present season. This bird is, as most readers of these pages are aware, purely a summer migrant, coming to us in spring and quitting our shores in October. From various reasons, which I touched upon some time since, these handsome little game birds are much scarcer in Britain than they used to be, and those sportsmen who manage to include them in their September bags are now very few and far between. Even in Ireland, where, until just the middle of last century, it used to be looked upon as a partially resident species, which could be shot sparingly throughout the winter, the quail is now quite a scarce bird, almost as scarce as it is with us. The fact, then, that some numbers of these birds have been met with in England this winter, seems to justify the old theory that the presence of quail after October meant a mild winter.

CONCERNING SEALS.

Notwithstanding the persecution to which seals have for the last century been subjected along our coast-line, it seems that they are, in places, distinctly on the increase, especially on our eastern littoral. Although this fact may not be very welcome to professional fishermen, whose business the seals constantly interfere with and whose nets they damage, this fact is a welcome one to all lovers of Nature. On some parts of the coast seals have been terribly harried since the introduction of cheap and accurate rifles—especially those of American manufacture—and it is, therefore, interesting to know that, notwithstanding the assaults of shore-shooters and boatmen, they manage not only to maintain existence, but in some instances even

to show very considerable increase. The Wash is an excellent instance in point. Here, in recent years, Mr. H. Donnison, an inspector of Eastern Sea Fisheries, has observed herds numbering from twenty to forty seals, which are to be seen at any time of the year lying on certain sandbanks. In 1897, which seems to have been a good seal year, this gentleman counted no less than 125 seals on a single sandbank lying near the Lindsey shore. In that year quite a number of these animals were captured by fishermen, and the crew of one small shrimp took no less than ten in two days. A good many quite infant seals were observed, and, in the opinion of Mr. Donnison and of other competent authorities, there can be little doubt that these babies were actually born and reared in the Wash. All this shows that seals are by no means yet in danger of complete extermination, even on the very East Coast of England, where crowds of fishermen are always eagerly at work. Whether the fishermen of the Wash will always permit their preserves to be invaded by animals which most undoubtedly take a heavy toll from the sea harvest, is a moot point.

MIGRATION OF SEALS.

One wonders whether the numbers of the seals seen in the Wash and upon other parts of the coast are influenced by migration, as they are in other parts of the world. Five years ago the seas bordering the coast-line of Northern Norway were invaded by immense hordes of large seals to such an extent that the normally rich fisheries of Finmark were completely destroyed, and the unfortunate inhabitants along that littoral were in despair. These people live on fish as well as by the fisheries at their doors, and they had actually to import from other parts of Norway the fish food which constitutes their sustenance. The seals, which thus for the time destroyed the livelihood of many hundreds of people, are known locally as Russian seals and are, as a fact, the bearded seal, the *Phoca barbata* of naturalists. They migrate to the northern parts of Norway annually from the White Sea and elsewhere, but within living memory never in anything like the enormous numbers witnessed in the winter of 1902. They were described as "forming a living wall round the coast, filling all the fjords, sounds and bays, eating all the fish they can lay hold of, and driving the rest to sea." They were slain and captured by hundreds, but no impression was made on their legions, and the fish meanwhile vanished. It was a terrible incursion for the poor Finmarken coast people, and its effects are not likely to be forgotten for many a long year. We in these islands are happily, never likely to witness such an invasion, but that, even upon the eastern coast-line of England and Scotland, seals are still plentiful enough to engage the attention of fishermen is well known to those familiar with the details of our various fisheries. The syndicate, for instance, which leases the Tay salmon-netting fishery from Perth to the sea are compelled to destroy systematically large numbers of the seals which prey upon their catches. During the last three years not less than 500 of these animals have been netted and destroyed on the various stations of the syndicate. Even as it is, many a valuable salmon is devoured in the nets by these bold and hungry marauders. H. A. B.

HEAVY SLEEPERS.

DURING the dreary months of winter, when the country-side lies desolate with frost and snow, and the ponds and ditches are coated with ice, one often wonders what is happening to the myriads of reptiles which, on the first warm days of spring, will emerge from their hiding-places, to the delight of the schoolboy and the terror of females. All Nature is sleeping peacefully until the warm sun again causes the juices—whether animal or vegetable—to flow once more, and the whole system is again set in motion. The number of reptiles and batrachia inhabiting these islands is far greater than is generally supposed, for, owing to the protective colouring of some and the nocturnal habits of others, they usually escape discernment. Few of us, however, have not noticed in springtime, when traversing fields in the neighbourhood of water, the swarms of tiny frogs which leap at every footstep from the grass around, or the little wriggling newts which abound so plentifully in the ponds and ditches. Equally familiar, perhaps, during the summer months are the ungainly toads one so often meets at dusk upon the roadside, while the nimble little lizard of our heaths or the mobile snake is no uncommon sight to the observant. All these have now disappeared, having sought refuge at the first spell of cold weather in holes, clefts or other available places apparently secure from disturbance, wherein they are passing the winter in a state of hibernation. While in this condition it is difficult to decide whether life is really extinct or not, so complete is the suspension of vital forces. No food whatever is taken, circulation and respiration are tardy and growth is impeded. It must be remembered that reptiles and batrachians, being cold-blooded creatures, unable to generate their own heat, are entirely dependent upon the surrounding temperature for the warmth necessary to keep them in a state of activity. In confinement, when kept in an artificially-heated vivarium during the colder part of the year, hibernation does not, of course, take place. I have found, however, that these creatures, when thus deprived of their annual rest, are less vigorous than they would otherwise be, and, in all probability, their existence is considerably curtailed; for the longevity which characterises reptiles and batrachia is no doubt due to their habit of spending so much of their time in sleep.

I once nearly lost a young Mississippi alligator through the lamp which was used to heat the water in its tank being accidentally allowed to go out on a rather chilly day. The poor animal was indeed so overcome by the cold that it was quite limp and apparently lifeless. However, I put it into some warm water with as little delay as possible, gradually increasing the temperature, and was soon relieved to see unmistakable signs of returning animation. In a short time the little creature had recovered sufficiently to indulge in a feed of minnows, of which it is very fond. It must not be considered, however, that cold is so fatal to reptiles indigenous to more temperate latitudes, for instances are recorded where they have actually been

imbedded in ice and have afterwards revived by a gradual thaw. It is also stated that snakes found frozen and as brittle as a dry stick have been restored by the application of warmth. On the other hand, many of them in summer lie basking in the burning rays of a noonday sun with apparent comfort, similar exposure to which would be unendurable by some animals. In tropical regions the annual dormancy of reptiles takes place during the hottest part of the year, and is known as aestivation, when many of them bury themselves in the mud and are literally baked up in their temporary tomb. In this country the suspension of animation takes place during the winter months, which is a beneficent law of Nature, for the food on which our reptiles subsist is then unobtainable.

Snakes and lizards are the first to seek seclusion and the last to awake, often delaying their return to active existence until late in the spring, when the frogs and newts have finished their propagation. Owing to its being less susceptible to cold, the slow-worm (or blindworm) emerges from its hybernaculum earlier in the year than the snakes, with which it is so often confounded. Among the many features by which this little lizard may be distinguished from a snake is the possession of eyelids, and this contrast has, possibly, led to the belief that those found hibernating, with closed eyes, were sightless—hence its popular name of blindworm. Snakes usually hibernate in company, and I have on several occasions, when searching for specimens, come across quite a little family of vipers locked in each others coils buried near the foot of a tree or some other out-of-the-way place. Frogs occasionally choose for their winter quarters holes in the ground, but more frequently conceal themselves in mud, congregated together in considerable numbers, which habit is also common to the newt. As many as a dozen of the latter may often be found huddled together beneath stones, bricks or pieces of timber. A moderately damp situation is invariably chosen, which, no doubt, is owing to the fact that respiration is carried on, while hibernating, chiefly through the pores of the skin.

The discovery of frogs and toads embedded far beneath the surface of the ground, and in mines, has given rise to a notion that these eccentric individuals have existed in their subterranean tomb since remote periods. As evidence of this it is often recorded that the rock in which these mysterious batrachians have been found was perfectly solid. There is, however, little reason to doubt that the animal in question had fallen down some shaft or some internal fissure in the earth before taking up its curious abode, and that the discoverer, when cleaving the stone obliterated all traces of the access thereto. Moreover, the scientific impossibility of a frog or toad living for any length of time without air or moisture is obvious. It is a noteworthy fact that no fossilised impressions of these batrachians have ever been disclosed to substantiate the theory of their having taken up their abode previous to the solidification of the rock. If one has witnessed the astonishing manner in which frogs and toads are able to squeeze themselves into apparently impenetrable

crevices, one can the more readily understand how these phenomena occur. Readers who have reptilian pets of their own—which are not tropical specimens—should stow them away in ventilated boxes containing moss during the winter months. If they have been feeding well during the previous summer, and they are kept out of the reach of frost, they will thus hibernate safely and awake in the following spring with renewed energies and appetites. A close watch should, however, then be maintained for signs of

returning animation, for should their hunger at that time not be appeased they will probably succumb. In the case of batrachia, care should be taken that they are kept in a permanently moist atmosphere, or the result will prove fatal. Of course, if the temperature of the room in which these creatures are kept be sufficiently low, they will accommodate themselves to circumstances and pass the winter buried beneath the mould in their case.

A. E. HODGE.

THE FLOWER FARMS OF THE SCILLIES.



C. J. King.

WHITE STOCKS AT A SCILLY FLOWER FARM.

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MUCH has from time to time been written on the flower industry of the Scilly Isles. More often than not extravagant reports have been published, evidently from the pens of those whose information has been procured second-hand and who have never set foot in the islands of the West. Not long ago, an illustrated article appeared in a well-known magazine in which the writer stated that on landing from the steamer on St. Mary's pier one was

overwhelmed with the perfume of the flowers; that on gaining any high point of view one saw nothing but a sheet of yellow blossoms as far as the eye could reach; and that during the month of January tons of roses and violets were being sent to the mainland markets. Now this is the veriest nonsense. On the pier the scent of the flowers never comes into competition with that of the ozone from the sea. The flowers left in the open, for obvious reasons of wind and storm, are seldom of a single acre

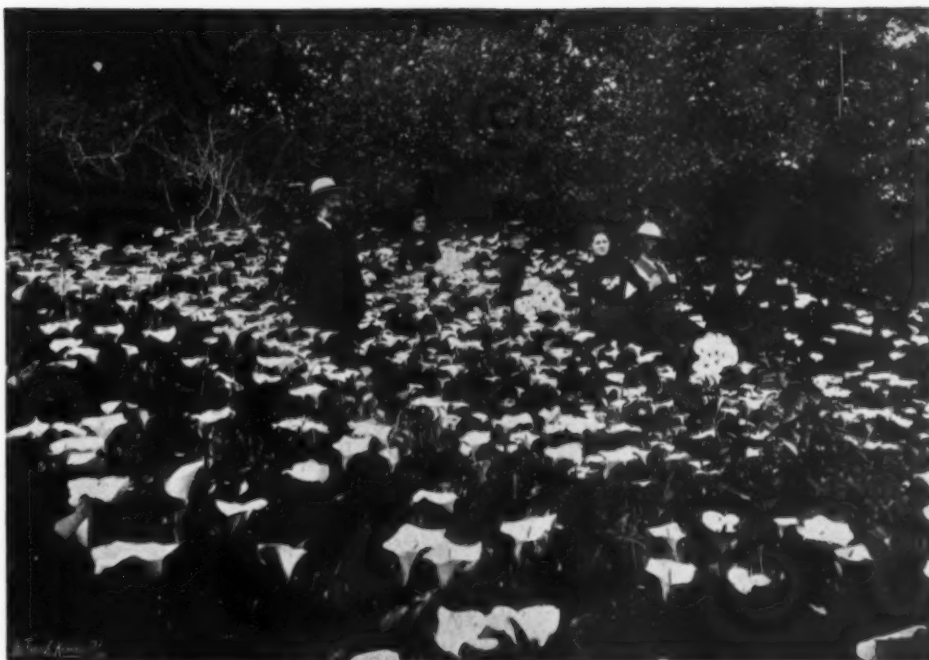


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NARCISSI "GLORIOSA."

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in extent in any one part of the islands; and violets and roses are not grown for market at all in the Scillies. Perhaps, therefore, a few notes by one who has lived many years in the islands, and has watched the flower industry almost from its birth, may be of interest to the readers of these pages. It would be difficult to say with certainty who sent the first consignment of flowers from Scilly to Covent Garden. Two or three growers have claimed this distinction; but there is little doubt that the trade commenced in a very small way; in fact, it is supposed that the very first lot found their way to the market in a hand-box, well within the memory of many still living. On looking over an article written in 1896, I find that twenty tons per steamer was then looked upon as a large quantity to be sent away at one time; and let me remark in passing that the steamer would be going three times a week. This year the same steamer has on several occasions taken over fifty tons at a time, so that during the last ten or eleven years the trade has more than doubled. Indeed, during the present season, which has eclipsed all previous records, all the growers have been working at high pressure, and, in many



C. J. King.

A FIELD OF ARUM LILIES.

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Two thousand were gathered here the morning this photograph was taken.



C. J. King.

NARCISSI.

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instances, it has been necessary to keep at it nearly all night in order to get the flowers away fast enough. This has been in a great measure due to the exceptionally favourable season, the weather having been perfect. It is very doubtful if a single flower among all the millions grown has been injured by wind or rain—the two great destroyers of Scillonian flowers. At one time it was thought that the flower season of 1907 would be a very poor one. The intense cold which prevailed throughout Europe during the latter part of December and in January, though it was very considerably modified ere it reached Scilly, had the effect of keeping back the flowers and causing the picking to commence on many farms nearly a month later than usual. But it also had the effect of playing havoc with the rival flowers in the South of France, with the result that, though the Scillonian flowers were later than usual, and that when they did come they came in enormous quantities, yet the prices procured were, on the whole, very good, and nothing like so bad as has often been the case when far less have been going into the markets. It must not be supposed that the flower industry in the Scillies is confined to the main island,



C. J. King.

GATHERED BLOOMS.

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St. Mary's. The off-islands, as they are called, all supply their share, and indeed Tresco, where the flower farm of the Lord Proprietor is situated, a large one. These off-island growers work under considerable disadvantage, more especially in regard to the shipping of their flowers. How many persons who admire the fresh blossoms of narcissi and daffodils, with which their tables and houses are bedecked during the early part of the year, imagine how hardy men have, long before daylight in the morning, braved the dangers of wind and weather, among rough seas and treacherous rocks, in order to convey those very flowers to the steamer which shall take them to Penzance. None but the very best of boatmen would dare to make the passage between these outlying islands and St. Mary's in the dark, and only those who know the Scillies can appreciate the difficulties encountered by them. Fancy, then, what the disappointment must be to these men when, after all their toil, the flowers realise bad prices. For instance, the writer was a few days since spending the night in the house of a flower-grower on the Island of Bryher who had just received the prices of the previous week's flowers which had been sent to Nottingham. Forty boxes of ornatus, the early-flowering pheasant-eye variety of narcissus, had realised 20s. This was practically the week's work of the man and his family, and it worked out at the magnificent figure of about 1s. per 1,000 blossoms. Such prices as these are bad enough for any grower, but when the man is an off islander they are even worse, as shown above. And this is by no means the worst of prices, even in a season which, on the whole, is considered a good one. The old days of extravagant prices are past, and it is only by sending huge quantities to market that the Scillonian flower-farmer can now hope to compete with the foreigner and the mainland. Of course, he has always the advantage of the climate, which enables him to produce his early flowers with less forcing than is required in other districts; but what he saves in coal is more than swallowed up in carriage.



C. J. King.

DARFODILS

Sheltered by Euanymus Helges.

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A CHILD'S FANCIES.

THE spirit of adventure and romance is strong in children, and one hopes it is not crushed out by the very intelligent and superior methods by which they are now being "developed" and "assisted" and "studied," and that they escape sometimes from even the best-ordered German systems. I do not think modern children care for or believe in fairies as their aunts and mothers—perhaps I should say their great-aunts and grandmothers—did; but many middle-aged people must remember how this sort of semi-faith coloured all their childhood, and can hardly believe that even Nature-study and careful watching can make up for those fantastic dreams of

which the consciousness of absolute escape and freedom made so large a part of the charm. As quite a little child, I recollect a small, mysterious door, up in one of the gables of the rambling old house. It was too high for me to believe it possible that anyone could reach it, and I had never seen it open or heard it alluded to. To me it was quite certainly the entrance to Fairy-land. If I could only climb up and get through I knew quite well

what treasures, what delightful scenes, awaited me there. I never spoke of it to anyone, but at last I ventured through it in fancy and often returned there, adding more and more details to the magic picture and the elfin play-mates. It was a haunt to escape to when nurse was "cross," or when one was tired of games on a twilight evening. How I wished that the fairies would carry me away for seven years, and bring me back, nearly grown up and free from all tiresome nursery rules, and meantime what joy I should have, riding in the green glades of Elfin-land, "careless of mankind." But I had another fairy-haunt, still better loved. This was a little cavern in the hillside, down a quiet country road, untroubled in those days by bicycles or motor-cars, along which we often walked with nurse. It was a long cave about 3ft. high; water leaked out above, and dropped and trickled into a little dark pool below, and it was all lined with short green moss, kept brilliantly fresh and jewel-like by the perpetual moisture. A broad stone threshold stretched in underneath, upon which there was room to stand, and anyone not very tall could go right inside. The water must have been a spring, for, though not deep, it was dark and crystal clear. It was, of course, evident that this was an ideal residence for a water-nymph, and it seemed only right and fitting to take gifts with which to

propitiate her—a flower from my garden, scraps of silver tinsel, coloured pebbles, even glass beads. I once made a tiny ring of very fine beads, taken from a worn-out purse, and threw it in, and was thrilled by the thought of the nymph's delight and astonishment when she found it. The "cavern" was rather a distant walk for "the little ones," and nurse sometimes required persuasion. On the other hand, it was just short of the cottage of the family laundress, to whom we were not seldom bearers of messages. When that happened the perambulator was wheeled on, and I was left in my glory till nurse returned after a nice long gossip. Then I could deposit my gift and sing to the fairy denizen and make magic circles with a hazel wand, and almost fancy I could see a misty wraith smiling in the green shadows; but on less fortunate days I was obliged to speed on before, and to perform my incantations with an eye cast over my shoulder, to spy the red shawl and the perambulator coming

round the turn of the road. Not that nurse would have objected, beyond saying that she was "most mazed at my items," but the great attraction was the secrecy. I went back not long ago to see my "cavern," and found that a cottage had been built close by and a neat pump



C. J. King

FIFTY CARTLOADS WAITING THEIR TURN ON THE QUAY.

Copyright.

erected over the spring, and it certainly no longer answered to one of my odes, which began :

Spirit of the wildest dell, where the fairy race can dwell.

Who does not remember the attraction of distant views, not always the most beautiful? On a bare hill, far away, might be seen a little white house under a solitary tree, the walls of which caught the evening sun and stood out, a small, bright spot. It looked so small and lonely, yet so bright, that I could never look at it without tears coming into my eyes, and when, years after, I heard the line, "The light that never was on sea or land," it darted straight into my remembrance, though I was far away from it.

No well-ordered play-room was ever so fascinating as a certain attic lumber-room, where one could make a little house with old mattresses and curtains and enjoy one's self thoroughly on a wet day, with books and apples and, perhaps, one chosen companion, full of a delightful sense that no one knew where we were and that we might be "young voyageurs" or gipsies or Cassy and Eva in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," as fancy prompted us. We were once sure that we knew a witch. One year we went to stay for a couple of months with a great-aunt, while our father and mother were paying visits. The pleasure and interest of fresh walks were inexhaustible, and wherever we went we very often met a lady, tall, thin, oddly dressed, with a weird face and large, gleaming eyes. She was not very young, and to us she looked quite old. She was always walking very fast, looking neither to right nor left. We called her the "Walking Judy," and we could see that our nurse and other servants spoke of her in undertones and with an air of mystery. There could be no doubt she was a witch, and probably lived in a cave to which she tried to entice children; and we looked at her with awe and

fascination. Then suddenly one day she stopped as she passed us and gave us three long grasses strung with wood-strawberries, and was gone almost before our shy, astonished thanks could be voiced. From that time we used to smile and nod at her, and were not quite so sure that she was a witch, "not a bad witch at least." On the last day of our stay we met her, and after we had passed turned round to look after her. Moved by some instinct she had stopped, too, and was gazing at us, and, on an impulse, I am glad to remember, I suddenly electrified the rest of the party by rushing back to her, crying, "Good-bye! We are going away to-morrow." Then she stooped and held me in her arms and kissed me, hugging me in a way which would have frightened me if I had not been so excited. She let me go, and I ran off to my brother and sister; but we looked back and waved and kissed our hands, and she stood watching us till we were out of sight. When we went back, a year after, she was dead. Long after I heard her story—an ill-placed love, a wilful, inexperienced girl, betrayed, disgraced. Those were hard old days, and there were no such things as condonation, or a career in which a woman might live down a false step. She had no money, and found a refuge with two old relatives, who never forgot or allowed her to forget her fault. She had no friends or pleasures, and her only outlet was that incessant walking, in which, I suppose, she worked off some of her bitter thoughts. Poor "Walking Judy," when I heard of the tragedy which had for a moment come so near to our happy lives, I was glad those weary feet had long been quiet, and very glad that those little children had smiled at you, and had never let you know that they thought you were a witch.

E. M. P.

SHOOTING.

SHOOTING IN BRIGAND-LAND.

ASIA-MINOR, and especially that portion of it adjoining Smyrna, is the happy hunting-ground of the modern brigand—not the brigand who cuts throats so much as the one who makes the payment of a large ransom the condition of release, the amount of such ransom varying with the social status and financial worth of the unhappy victim. The *modus operandi* is generally the same. The brigands mark down their man and lay their plans for weeks or months before they attempt a *coup*; when the long-sought opportunity occurs they swoop down upon their man, carrying him off by forced marches to the mountains, where he is kept in durance vile. After a time negotiations are begun by the brigands—often through the intermediary of some shepherd or hillman—and a meeting is arranged for the settlement of terms between themselves and the prisoner's representative. A bargain is struck and a trysting-place named where the brigands agree to hand over their victim in return for hard cash, and the hard cash generally amounts to some thousands of pounds. Once the prisoner is free, the hunt begins, by which time the brigands are probably far beyond the reach of a half-hearted pursuit. In the case of a subject of a larger European Power, international *pourparlers* attempt to fasten the indebtedness on a prevaricating Turkish Government—generally without success. In the case of a Turkish or Greek subject, or one of a smaller Power, redress is out of the question, and the pecuniary loss falls entirely upon the ransomed victim. Such is the history of many a tale of brigandage as practised near Smyrna, and the frequency of its occurrence makes life there very insecure. It is unsafe to drive outside Smyrna after dark; unsafe to shoot without an armed escort; unsafe to be on one's farm alone, as instanced by the recent capture of Baron van Hemstra on his, and his subsequent release, on payment by his relatives of £6,000. In this case the brigand chief—Andrea—was captured with part of the booty, and is to-day an object of interest to visitors to the Smyrna gaol, but the balance of the ransom is still claimed in vain from the Turkish

Government. So much for brigandage. A journey into the interior of Asia-Minor and away from Smyrna is fraught with less danger, but an armed escort acts as a deterrent to the evil-disposed, and on a recent shooting trip undertaken by the writer was deemed advisable. The escort is depicted in some of the accompanying illustrations. The objectives of this trip were the mountain ranges known as the Ak Dag and the Maimun Dag. On the former are to be found phenomenally big stags, which, in point of weight, strength of horn and size generally, compare with Carpathian and Hungarian stags; on the latter, a remarkable formation of conglomerate—waterless, treeless and bleak—ibex in fairly plentiful numbers. The Ak Dag is reached by a thirteen-hour railway journey from Smyrna to Diner, the present, though not the ultimate, terminus of the

Smyrna-Aidin line. At Diner the night must be spent, and the train is again taken the following morning back to Sudledj, a fever-stricken spot, where it is inadvisable to sleep owing to malaria and mosquitoes. From Sudledj to the first camp on the Ak Dag is a nine-hour or ten-hour walk or ride. There is only one through train per week from Smyrna to Diner, but the journey, performed by the writer and his two companions on the cow-catcher of the engine, is a most picturesque one. The Maander Valley is followed



AT THE FOOT OF THE AK DAGH.

during the greater portion of the route, and its richness and luxuriance is unsurpassed. It is the home of that universal commodity, the Smyrna fig, and forests of fig trees stretch from the banks of the Maander to the farthest horizons on either side. It is as unhealthy as it is beautiful, and teems with animal-life, especially birds, which make it the paradise of the ornithologist, as it is that of the antiquarian. What other railway in the world can boast of such an array of ruined cities as are passed on the Smyrna-Aidin line? Ephesus, Tralles, Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colossæ are but a few of the relics of a past golden age. Their columns, aqueducts and arches rise from among the fig trees, imperishable monuments of a higher architecture; their theatres and temples are still visible in the folds of the hills, and their masonry is still borrowed by a vandal

age to build or pave its villages or span its rivers. There is in Asia-Minor infinite variety of sport. Within a mile of the railway on the Maimun Dagb there is a splendid herd of ibex, and in two short drives taken one day some twenty or thirty were



DOOMED!

seen either by ourselves or the beaters, and one good head obtained. There are in the mountains besides ibex, bear, wolf, boar, panther, moufflon, fallow deer and red deer, with partridges, red-legged, and grey, sand-grouse, francoline, bustard, hares and quail in the plains. The stalking on the Ak Dagb resembles that in some parts of the Carpathians. Thick forest and here and there thick undergrowth make success, except during the roaring season, uncertain, as the stags are otherwise most difficult to locate. India-rubber-soled shoes are, of course, a *sine qua non*; but the pine cones with which the ground is strewn make the lightest footfall audible, and one may walk all day and frequently disturb deer without ever seeing them. The stalking is of the tip-toe and fallen-tree-creeping order, and success is with the sportsman who has the luck to see the stag before he is himself seen. On one occasion, after hours of fruitless walking, I returned home to find that the Turkish escort had come face to face with a big stag close to the camp, and had apparently fired volleys at it from their horses—I may add, without result, a fact which rather detracted from their value in my eyes as guardians of our safety. We usually started for our daily stalk before dawn, returning to camp about 3 p.m. or 4 p.m., occasionally alternating stalking with short drives for bear or stags. A shooting trip into the mountainous districts of Asia-Minor can be recommended to all who have time at their disposal. Considering the vast extent of the country and its potentialities for sport, it is matter for surprise that so few Englishmen attempt the expedition. There are countless ranges so far unexplored which the extensions of the German Bagdad line and the English Smyrna-Aidin line will bring within reach of all to whom the unknown offers charms.

EDWARD A. STONOR.

A BLUETTERING ENTRANCE.

JUST as we were beginning to congratulate ourselves on being fairly out of the wood so far as the prospect went of any heavy fall of snow to bring trouble to the red deer and the grouse, there comes the downfall in the midst of which February went out like a lion and March came in with a roar. For the grouse, at all events, it is, of course, a great deal better that it should arrive now than a little later, though, unfortunately, the present conditions do not give us any indemnity for the days to come. Both deer and grouse have had a very kindly winter up to the end of February. In March we expect some of the new growth of pasture for the deer to begin, and if this is seriously checked it always has an ill effect on their condition and weight in the stalking season. So far as we are able to ascertain, the growth of horn depends mainly on rather later circumstances, though this, too, is affected by the early pasturage and the general condition of the deer. The snow has practically put a stop to the spring angling in most rivers, which was opening exceptionally well.

SHOOTING ONE-HANDED.

We have a letter from a correspondent which contains an account of some emotions and a moral experienced by himself—a man with the ordinary pair of arms, reduced, by the painful necessity of an attack of rheumatism in the left shoulder, to shooting with one hand only. The twelve-bores, which were his usual weapon

when he had the proper complement of arms, seemed rather heavy for him when he had the use of one arm only, so he provided himself with a sixteen-bore, and, shooting with one hand, surprised himself greatly by his success at high pheasants, shooting them almost as well as with his two hands. But for any other kind of shot he found the one-armed business not nearly so easy to manage. It is easy to understand how this might be. In shooting at the so-called "rocket" overhead, the greater part of the weight of the gun is borne on the shoulder. When the gun has to be held in a more horizontal position the weight has to be borne by the arm only, and to wield this unusual weight and, at the same time, point the gun accurately, must evidently be a hard task for unpractised muscles. The moral of the story is that the overhead pheasant, though it is such a satisfactory bird to kill, and its neat killing is such a fine spectacle, does not really make the same demands on the shooter's skill as many a shot which is less dramatic. This is no new light on the subject, however, for those who have really given a thought to it. When the pheasant complicates the problem by sideways and downward curves it is quite another story.

CURIOUS ACT OF A RETRIEVER.

A singular instance of the intelligence of a retriever has been sent to us by a correspondent. A grouse-drive was in progress, but not many birds were coming for the moment, and a bird, shot from the next butt, fell very close behind the butt in which was the retriever, with his master. The temptation was too much for the old dog; he went out stealthily and picked up the bird, but instead of bringing it, as his usual habit was, whether the bird had been killed by his master or by a gun in a neighbouring butt to his master's butt, he carried it deliberately to the butt of the gun by whom it had been killed. Of course this going out of the butt at all while the drive was in progress was one of the worst of crimes, and fraught with danger to the dog himself; but the master has explained, in a soft-hearted way, that it was a weakness that the old dog had, that he only yielded to it when the bird fell very near the butt, and so on—to make excuses for him. The curious part of the story is that the dog should have shown this gentlemanly sense of the proper proprietorship of the bird, and one is inclined to ask how it is that if the dog should do this once, in this exceptional instance, he should not do it always? To that the answer perhaps is that in the ordinary gathering of the slain, when the drive is over, the dog does not have the same immediate opportunity of seeing by whom the bird was shot. The incident is a very singular one, because it shows the dog acting in a way opposed to the instinct of this or of any other retriever, which certainly is to bring things to his master, without any regard to where they came from. Altogether, it is a remarkable contribution to the lengthy history of canine intelligence.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LOCAL WEIGHT OF WOODCOCK AND SNIPE VARYING.

SIR,—A few weeks ago you published a communication from a correspondent in Ireland speaking of a bag of snipe in which one, apparently abnormally large, weighed 5oz, while the largest of the rest weighed no more than 3oz. Mr. Harvie-Brown followed this with a comment indicating, very gently, that the peculiarity of this bag was really not so much the large size of the heaviest snipe as the lightness of the others; but incidentally he mentions a point of far greater interest than the mere statistics of the weight—that is, that the snipe and woodcock in some of the Scottish islands are normally heavier than those elsewhere. The special interest of this point seems to me to lie in the fact that it is an indication about



IN CAMP.

the migration habit of the birds—that is, supposing that these were winter immigrants and not native bred. That is the first question which we might ask Mr. Harvie-Brown to make clear for us, and if these unusually heavy birds are immigrants, their weight offers

strong demonstration that on migration they return to the same winter quarters. If they are native-bred it points, as regards the woodcock at least, to a tendency on the part of the birds to return to their home nesting ground. This, seeing what we know of the caprices of woodcock in their choice of winter quarters, would be far less contrary to what we should expect—indeed, quite in accordance with expectation; but that they return with any approach to regularity to the same winter haunts is still in much need of clearer demonstration before being accepted.—II.

RYPER IN SCOTLAND.

SIR,—Having read a paragraph in your issue of February 22nd, about the ryper, I feel I must write a few lines in justification of my experiment of introducing the bird into Scotland. After over thirty years of grouse-driving, I can say that the ryper is quite equal to our red grouse in flying powers and other sporting attributes, and if we can obtain a good driving bird in the wooded parts of our country we shall be a step further towards perfection in sport. The edible qualities of young rypers are quite as good as those of young grouse, and no doubt if the old birds take to feeding on heather, they

will be much the same as old grouse for the table. I have not seen the extraordinary statement that the ryper were supposed to inhabit an "unoccupied zone between the habitat of the grouse and that of the ptarmigan," and anyone who knows anything at all about ryper (in Norwegian the "skov" or wood ryper) is aware that it is below the grouse elevation, and not above it, that the bird would be found. The idea of a vacant zone spoken of in your paragraph cannot possibly have occurred to any human being who has ever been on a preserved moor. I have seen many ptarmigan in grouse-drives, especially on Deeside, but I should never expect to see a ryper where grouse and ptarmigan mingle. The ryper is, virtually, the same bird, and as good in every way as our red grouse, and should afford sport in the fir and birch woodlands which spread over so vast an area of Scotland, and which now only yield a moderate bag of black-grouse and a few woodcock. In conclusion, I can only hope that whoever wrote the paragraph in COUNTRY LIFE will live to find out that there is no analogy between Norwegian rats and Norwegian ryper, and that he may enjoy sport with the latter in places where nowadays he would hardly let off his gun.—W. STEWART-MENZIES.

[FURTHER NOTES ON SHOOTING WILL BE FOUND ON OUR LATER PAGES.]

ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

LEAP DAY GOLF.

HAD other things, excepting the calendar, been equal, the golfer should have enjoyed the privilege, which he is not likely to live to repeat, of playing golf on five good Saturdays this February, the last of them being that day on which it is extremely perilous for a bachelor to take part in a mixed foursome, or even to approach the ladies' links. Unfortunately, however, this fifth Saturday was entirely spoilt, over a great part of the country, for golfing uses by a fall of snow of varying depth, but generally of depth sufficient to reduce golf to folly. It is not only foolish as a game, but very foolish also for the interests of the green. What is almost worse, however, than playing on a snowy green is sweeping snow off the green, as is sometimes done, or attempted. For the sake of a few hours of very doubtful pleasure in the poor substitute for the real game which is thus attained, patches of good grass are torn away with the snow in its removal which may take many months to recover themselves. On the whole it has been an uncommonly favourable winter for work on the green; but as for the greens themselves, they have had none of the useful rest which is given them by a heavy snow lying long on the ground. They have, at least, not had that yet, and we cannot hope they will.

GOLF AT ASHDOWN FOREST.

Nevertheless, in the immediate neighbourhood of London golf could be played, and by waiting till the sun had done its work on the snow, two rounds in the day were possible on the Ashdown Forest course, though a fresh snowstorm rather took the fun out of the later round. It was my own job on that day to play off a tie with Mr. H. Crossland for the previous month's medal, but we did not succeed in deciding the matter, though both of us tried hard enough to do so. We tied again, at a very moderate score of 81, so now there is a double tie to be played some day before we die. The work on the course, principally the making of the fifth hole into a long and very good hole, across the stream, instead of, as at present, a very short and very bad hole, is proceeding splendidly in favourable weather, and will be finished this week if no more frost or snow comes.

LADIES IN COUNCIL.

A good deal of useful business was transacted, as usual, in a very business-like way, by the Ladies' Golf Union at its recent meeting under Mr. Talbot Fair's presidency. A unique honour was accorded to Lady Alice Stanley for her services to the union, for she was elected a vice-president, an office hitherto restricted to mere men. Eight new clubs were affiliated to the union, which is now nearly 200 strong. A proposal was brought forward by the secretary, Miss M. E. Phillippa, that in the international matches the teams should be eleven, instead of seven, a side, as heretofore. This was not carried, but an amendment accepted by the proposer was adopted to the effect that in the future the teams shall be composed of nine players. A useful resolution was carried to restrict players who represent one county from entering for the competitions held by another county. The scope of this good resolution might very well have been extended so as to debar players from representing more than one club in a single year in any team matches under the control of the union. And if only we had a union among us poor men, who are so hampered by the traditions, it would be an excellent thing if it would pass a rule that men shall declare at the beginning of the season what club they will play for, and that they shall play for that and for no other. In "golf as she is played" we have the same man representing any number of clubs, playing one day for a club which he may be opposing the next, and reducing the whole thing to a farce and the interest in it to a minimum. The ladies of the Golf Union do their work so much better than we do that they really ought to be given votes without further question.

A MISTAKE, AND AN APOLOGY.

I am very glad to see that Mr. Garden Smith has recovered so far his normal health as to resume his august seat in the editorial chair, and yet more pleased at the first use he has made of his recovered liberty of the pen to correct me in what I have no doubt is my mistake in saying that Mr. "Alick" Crawford, brother of poor Mr. Frank, had joined the majority long ago. Mr. Smith says that he saw Mr. A. Crawford in the flesh, quite substantially, only a short while back. I wish we could find out that we had made a great many more mistakes of the same kind about our golfing friends. As we grow older it becomes only too certain that we are right in deeming that most of them are gone before. But with regard to this Mr. Crawford, to whom I

owe apologies, he has himself in some measure to blame, for if not with the big majority, he is, I am sure, of the very small minority of those who have committed golfing *felo de se*—have given up the game—for I never see him now on a golf course, and he is too big not to be seen if there. A man who is once a golfer and gives it up deserves anything. There is one suffering golfer at the moment we all are sorry to hear of, James Braid, who has certainly done nothing of this kind to deserve his infliction. He has not given up golf, but golf has given him up for the time being. Like other eminent men he is, at the moment, laid up with influenza. But better now than a little later. He will have, we hope, full time to recuperate before the championship.

THE UNIVERSITY GOLFERS.

As is the common fate of University teams, Cambridge suffered defeat at the hands of the Mid-Surrey Club; but one of its leading members, Mr. Longstaffe (would it be unworthy trifling with so grave a theme to suggest that this gentleman, of all others, ought to play with a fishing-rod club?), did quite a notable thing in halving his match with Mr. S. H. Fry. Mr. Fry is very bad to beat at Mid-Surrey, and probably this is the best individual achievement of any of the University golfers in their trial matches. Mr. Longstaffe looks like being a formidable match for Mr. Robertson-Durham. Unfortunately, the Oxford match against Walton Heath could not be played by reason of the snow.

GOLF AT WIMBLEDON.

The voice of the pessimist has been heard a good deal in the land, telling us that the days of golf on Wimbledon Common were numbered. The latest intelligence does not support his pessimism. We are told that at a meeting lately held in Wimbledon in support of the formation of a Wimbledon Town Club sixty residents put in an appearance, that about 100 members were enrolled, and that it was hoped that "increased facilities" would be granted for golf on the common. All this indicates a decided change from the local feeling which was once very hostile to golf, and does not sound at all like its abandonment on that well-worn green. Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P. for Wimbledon, is to be president of the club.

THE CITY'S ESTIMATE OF THE GOLFER.

One has often been told that the City of London is the place for a man to go to if he wishes (as, perhaps, few judicious men will wish) to learn his true place and value in the general scheme of things; but we had, perhaps, hardly thought that it was the place of all others to teach him his just value as a golfer. It appears, however, that even for this salutary lesson the City is the best possible school. A certain golfer, not especially noted for any over-diffidence or extreme modesty as to his own skill and powers, made a match in the fulness of his heart to play a very noted professional on condition of receiving a third. The match was for a small stake originally, but the news of it spread among his friends (possibly among some of his enemies also), and for days after the making of the match he was continually being rung up by the call-bell of the telephone at his City office to ask whether he was willing to back himself for the great event. The first few offers he accepted eagerly. Then, as it became gradually borne in on him that in the general opinion of his golfing acquaintance this match was an extremely good thing for the professional, his ardour began to cool, and in the end, unable for all his noble self-esteem to believe that the unanimous opinion of his golfing world could be in error, he paid a small forfeit on the wagers already made and declared the match off. After all, this final admission of inferiority may be taken as proof that he was not so hermetically sealed in his mantle of self-confidence as some golfers whom we may know; but the whole story is one bit of evidence the more as to the virtue of the City of London for showing a man his true worth.

CEDARS OF LEBANON.

In the many counsels generously given, whether by Braid or lesser men, for the laying out of golf links, there is one point of which the importance is not nearly enough realised. It is a point which applies only to garden golf links, or others of a strictly private kind. It is this: that it will be immensely for the advantage of the owner of such a course if one or two of the holes be so placed that the drive or the approach to them is over, or nearly over, one or more trees such as cedars of Lebanon, or some other kinds which have dense, wide-spreading branches. If this be planned with a skilful regard to the contingencies, a very considerable number of golf balls (at 2s. apiece) will lodge up in these impervious receptacles and be lost for ever to the players. The owner, however, who is most probably resident, while the

majority of the players are guests or visitors, may go forth any morning after a heavy gale and pick up quite a nice pocketful of balls which the wind has caused the shaken branches to cast on to the ground below them. Obviously this is an arrangement not to be commended to country house hosts who are so munificent as to supply golf balls for their guests to play with and lose with a light heart; but wise counsels are not addressed to those who are thus extravagantly hospitable.

H. G. H.

THE HUNTERCOMBE COURSE.

All golfers who know the attractive charms of the Huntercombe course will learn with regret that some difficulties have intervened lately to hinder the continued prosperity of the club. The course is so good, and the situation is so picturesque for all city dwellers, that it would be a thousand pities were the efforts of Willie Park in creating the course, and of those members of the club who have for years fostered the game here, to go for naught. But the competition among private courses has to-day become so keen, and so many of first-class quality are being promoted at a nearer distance in and around the outskirts of London, that it is scarcely matter for surprise to hear that a crisis has arrived in the affairs of Huntercombe. The access to the course is not easy, except to those who have ample leisure at their disposal, or for those who can spend a week-end there with comfort. The result of recent difficulties there has been that a scheme has been propounded for the reorganisation of the Huntercombe Golf Club, under which a syndicate of debenture-holders will be formed to take a lease of the club for a term of years, and to build a new club-house. The debentures are for £100 each, carrying interest at 4 per cent., and free the holder from any liability for future annual subscriptions during the term of the lease. A capital redemption policy will be effected for the purpose of providing a fund for the redemption of the principal money. A meeting was held at the Law Society's Rooms in Chancery Lane on Wednesday, February 26th, when the scheme was further discussed and explained.

WHAT IS A CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE?

At a time like the present, when so much is being written and spoken about the merits of championship courses, it is not easy to grasp what are the essential features which should distinguish a championship course. The net product of the discussion seems to leave the subject very much where it has stood for at least the last quarter of a century. Some golfers favour length in the holes and long carries off the tee; others are in favour of a narrow course well sprinkled with bunkers, and a fair number of long holes to test wooden club play through the green; while a third section of opinion believes that a rolling, lummocky course, by providing variety of lie and stance, with plenty of bunkers near the green, is a better test of play and resource than any other ordeal to which the golfer can be subjected.

A CONFLICT OF OPINION.

What strikes the observer most in the controversy is the conflict of opinion even among the best and most experienced players. No general standard, either of length or distribution of short, medium and long holes, has been established even among the championship authorities themselves. But though there is this great diversity of opinion in fixing upon the principles as to the best manner in which long, short and medium holes should interlace, every player who aspires to championship form has an instinctive feeling whether or not a course that is played over is worthy to be dignified with the name of "championship." It is not the number of yards that compose the round that matter at all. A short course of 4,500 yds. or 5,000 yds. might be an infinitely better test of play than the course with 6,500 yds.; and therefore the point of dispute revolves not so much round the distribution of long and

short holes as the character of the ground over which all the holes are laid out.

OLD AND NEW COURSE CONSTRUCTION.

If re is the factor in the problem that matters most, for the nature of the ground and the hazards, which are permanent features of it, settle the length of the holes almost automatically. The old constructors of courses did not make the same scientific study of the subject as we do to-day. The land and the bunkers were already there, and the length of the holes was fixed mainly with a view to work in as effectively as may be an irregular sand bunker so as to guard the green or to test the driving powers from the tee. The first hole at St. Andrews is a case in point. The Sailean Burn invited utilisation by the golfer, and hence to-day we have perhaps the best and fairest opening hole on all the championship courses. The holes under the old system fitted naturally into the configuration of the ground and were governed by its formation. To-day, however, the golfing position is altering. A more minute study is being made of playing requirements, and an effort is being made to find out by study and experience what are the best and most difficult tests to apply to championship form. Though the nature of the ground itself always insists upon thrusting itself forward as the first consideration to be taken into account, modern championship golf has become more insistent than of yore upon good long holes and a multiplicity of bunkers.

LARGELY A QUESTION OF "FANCY."

Braid has been revealing the modern tendency in the interesting series of articles he has lately contributed to these pages. His diagrams show the scientific aspect of course construction in its highest form, and when the lowly golfer contemplates them he is inclined to utter, in the words of the Psalms of David, "the proud have digged pits for me." But the championship course designed after Braid's model has yet to come into being, and meanwhile amateur and professional alike, when they descend upon the virtues of championship courses that are extant to-day, are mainly guided by the strong impressions of individual fancy and liking. Though the measuring standard is absent, golfers yet feel that there are several assured attributes that a championship course should possess. It should begin with a fairly long and easy hole, like the first at St. Andrews and Sandwich. In fact, the first three or four holes should be long and not too difficult, so as to hinder congestion. The short holes should be in the middle of the round, and a difficult short hole to finish with is by no means an unpleasing or uninteresting feature. As the round opens out towards the last half round the difficulties should increase, for then the player's muscles are fully unlimbered, and he has got into what the runner calls his "stride." The two essential features, therefore, which every player has fixed upon in his own mind, at least, is that a championship course should apply the hardest test to all kinds of varied play, enabling the long driver to secure his advantage in distance, and the less athletic player his chances of dexterous recovery with the iron clubs at the medium and short holes.

THE SECOND SHOT.

How true it is to say that for the majority of new recruits to the game the second shot is the most difficult and frequently the most disastrous. The art of picking up the ball clean and driving it straight is less common than is generally supposed. A correspondent, writing on this subject, says: "There is the dreadful second shot, which, if it is to be fairly long and straight, always seems to me to be the hardest of all and the severest test of a man's game. I have been repeatedly beaten by a friend of mine solely by his superior second shots." The tendency seems to be to labour the erroneous impression that the ball needs digging out of the lie instead of being swept forward gracefully as in the tee shot. The bad second shots of the majority of players tell their own tale in flying divots and hacked turf. A. J. R.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WINDOW-PANE INSCRIPTIONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Mr. C. H. Hughes's letter on the window-pane inscription at Burford, a small town in Oxfordshire, situated a few miles west of Witney, is of much interest. There does not appear to be any sufficient reason for supposing that the signature "Samuel Pepys" is a forgery. The famous Samuel does not record in his Diary any visit to Burford, nor in fact any visit to Oxfordshire in the year 1666. This, however, is not actually conclusive against his authorship of the inscription or of the signature. The name is not written with letters at all like in form those of the Diarist's signature; but scratching with a diamond is not the same process as writing with a pen. One would be pleased to be able to believe that the inscription was scratched by him, but it must be remembered that there were other Samuel Pepyses alive at the same time. I mention this inscription in my volume of "Pepysiana" (1899), but I do not there express any opinion. In November, 1901, a friend who was born at Burford in a house opposite the one with the inscription sent me a note on the subject. He told me that the George Inn disappeared before 1834, and he mentioned that date because in that year his father first went to Burford, and he was informed that the inn was not in existence then. A curious fact noted by my friend is that on one of the windows of his father's house there was cut an inscription which he considers to be of about the same date as the one under discussion. This is as follows:

"J. J. Jekyll
attorney at law for Burford
a fool."

One would be glad to have a further light thrown upon the curious inscription and signature on the window of the house in George Yard, Burford. It does not appear to be at all necessary to suppose that the inscription was scratched by a lady. It is probably quite impersonal, and I should say was certainly a quotation, for it seems to be written very much in the spirit congenial to Sir William Diverant.—HENRY B. WHEATLEY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Anything connected with the genial diarist, Samuel Pepys, is of interest, but he probably had nothing to do with the inscription enquired about by Mr. Hughes. I have pleasure in enclosing a fac-simile of the usual autograph, which agrees with originals, of dates widely apart, in my

*Do not let his most Obedt Servt
S. Pepys.
Do. by Hou 27 April 1670.*

possession. Even after making due allowance for the difference in writing on glass, it would seem unlikely that the Burford signature could be by the same hand. Dear old Pepys certainly had his peccadilloes, so freely confessed under the shelter of his now penetrated cypher; but let us hope that scratching his name in public places was not one of them.—F. C.

THE PLAGUE OF MIDGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Like your correspondent "Anxious," I, too, have suffered from midges, and I sympathise with him. Medical science, which has shown us how to exterminate the mosquito, because it disseminates disease, has not thought the midge worth its attention, though I am not sure that the amount of human misery caused by the latter is not as great as that caused by

mosquitoes. The name midge covers a number of insects, but the one which most concerns us, and to which "Anxious" alludes, breeds in much the same way as the mosquito, in water and damp places, and ought to be susceptible to the same treatment; but it seems never to have been tried, nor do those who have conducted mosquito experiments appear to have thought it worth while to record whether they incidentally destroyed the midges or not, perhaps because the two plagues do not commonly occur simultaneously. In parts of North America there is a minute midge allied to our common one to which the red Indians have given, in recognition of its diminutiveness, the name of "no-see-um," which is so bad that on fishing excursions I have found life only endurable by using a net, made of a double thickness of fine gauze stretched on a wire frame, at night, and by the plentiful application of various "fly-mixtures," usually some variant of tar and pennyroyal, to the hands, face and neck, in addition to a gauze mask, in the daytime. It is possible thus with gauze nets and screens to protect one's person and to keep the insects out of a room or house, the screens for the latter purpose being made, like the ordinary mosquito screens of warm countries, to fit into window and door-frames. But this is not what we want to get at; and if an "Anxious" can stir up someone to make proper experiments with the paraffin or a similar treatment to see if the plague cannot be checked at its source he will be doing a service to humanity.—R. P. H.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I have read the letter of your correspondent "Anxious," in your issue of the 29th ult., with some interest. I have suffered a good deal from the pests while in pursuit of sport in various parts of the Highlands, the West of Ireland and Scandinavia. I have never yet heard of any adequate remedy against the swarms of midges, which, in certain situations, make the life of the fishman and gunner well-nigh unbearable. It is possible—though I am not aware that it has ever yet been tried—that these pests might be attacked and destroyed in their breeding haunts by paraffin, as are the fever-bearing mosquitoes in Africa and other tropical countries. But, even if the midge could be dealt with in this way—a fact by no means yet established, I believe—the remedy might conceivably be as injurious as the plague itself. Paraffin, if used in large quantities, would almost certainly contaminate the streams and waters frequented by midges, and trout and other fish would probably be driven away. It would be extremely interesting to have on this topic the opinion of an expert in entomology, who might be able to tell us whether or no the midge can be successfully attacked in its breeding haunts. Personally I am inclined to doubt it; and I believe that those who pursue trout, salmon and char in some of the fairest scenery in the world, must continue to undergo the galling martyrdom with which most anglers and many gunners are familiar.—B. A.

NESTING-BOXES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Perhaps some experiences of my own may be interesting to your readers. Almost any kind or shape of box may be employed, the chief object being to have a lid that can be easily removed, in order to observe the doings of the occupants without disturbing them; at the same time they must be quite secure from prowling enemies in the shape of cats. A friend of mine was always very successful with cocoanut-shells, which he suspended from various trees. His method was to break the shell in halves and, after extracting the nut, make a small hole at one end, the two pieces were then fastened together by means of wire passed through holes in the shell; but here there is no opportunity for observing the birds without disturbing them. The most effective and at the same time most simple form, is a box about 9 in. high by 6 in. wide by 6 in. deep, preferably with a sloping roof. If it has a very new or white appearance it should be covered with pieces of bark. Such boxes may be obtained from many bird fanciers. Which birds will inhabit your boxes may, to a certain extent, be decided by the size of the entrance hole; for the various species of the tit family it should be just large enough to admit a man's thumb without touching the sides. By this means the house-sparrow, with which most gardens are infested, is safely excluded. To obtain other birds, such as the robin, nuthatch, tree-sparrow or starling, all of which commonly build in boxes, the entrance should be just large enough to permit a chicken's egg to pass through, but not larger. In France, nesting "pots," a kind of earthenware jar, fixed horizontally to a wall, are extensively used. I had once placed a box rather low in the hope of attracting the notice of a pair of robins, for whom boxes should always be within three feet of the ground, and I was one day, surprised to find the entrance hole completely filled in by a wall of neatly woven fibres. On removing the lid I discovered that the occupant was no other than a tiny dormouse, who, with an aggrieved countenance, blinked at me enquiringly. He had evidently been disturbed in his winter sleep and had happened upon my box. Now is the time to place boxes for the coming season. Care should be taken not to place the boxes too low, as by doing so you expose the creatures dependent upon you to numerous unnecessary dangers. I usually find that about 80 per cent. of my boxes are inhabited in the middle of the season. I rarely have any difficulty in getting them occupied, as birds often have a great deal of trouble to find suitable nesting-places, owing to their leaving it too late to seek for one, I imagine. The following curious nesting-places give proof of this: Beehive, salmon tin, tap-boat, flower-pot and even under a glass shade in a churchyard.—SIDNEY A. SEARS.

A DETERMINED SINGER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Can you, or any reader of your delightful paper, tell me whether it is an uncommon thing for a song-thrush to sing when on the ground. In my garden, both last spring and this, I have noticed a thrush which, after singing from early dawn in a tree near my window, comes down on to the lawn for his breakfast, but even then he sings between his mouthfuls, and I have heard him sing as he hopped along. I do not remember noticing such a case before, and should be interested to know whether this habit of singing on the ground is usual, or whether my friend is a particularly light-hearted bird.—MARY W. BOURDILLON.

A BATTERY'S PET.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I think the accompanying photograph of No. 3 Mountain Battery's mule Kundahar may be of interest to your readers. The following is a short account of her hard-working life: Date of foaling 1876, date taken on strength of battery 1879. War services (always with No. 3 M.B., R.G.A.):



The Afghan War 1879-1880, including march from Kabul to Kandahar, battles of Saidabad and Kandahar; Zhob Valley 1884, Burma 1886-1887, Sikkim 1888, Miranzai 1891, Isazai 1892, Relief of Chitral 1895, Tirah Expedition 1897-1898. The mule was twenty-nine years old in October, 1904, when the photograph was taken, and is in perfect condition, having marched 582 miles from Rawal Pindi to Quetta in the early spring of that year. She is entitled to wear the ribbons of the following medals on her brow band: Afghan War Medal, Kandahar Star, Old Frontier Medal, New Frontier Medal, Long and Distinguished Service Medal. She was cast for age in 1902 and bought by the battery as a pet, and is still as hale and hearty as ever, having marched back the 582 miles from Quetta to Rawal Pindi in December last. Now that the battery is on service (Zakka Khel Expedition) she has been left behind, no doubt to her great annoyance, at the depot at Rawal Pindi. Her legs are clean and free from blemishes and she goes as sound as a three year old.—N. ELIOT (Captain R.G.A.)

THE WATERLOO CUP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I am an old coursing man and have read with no little interest your account of the principal incident in the recent Waterloo Cup. I notice, however, that neither the weight nor measurements of the winner or runner-up were given, or, indeed, that of any of the best greyhounds. To myself these are points of great interest, and I venture to think they are equally so to many coursing people. Perhaps you might be able to supplement the article in question by supplying us with some confirmation on this matter. I am sending you the weight and exact measurements of the ever-famous Master McGrath, which will perhaps interest some of your readers. Lord Lurgan's celebrated greyhound won the Waterloo Cup three times, in 1868, 1869 and 1871. He weighed 54lb. when he won it the first time, and during the whole of his career was never 2lb. lighter or heavier. His exact measurements were: Head—from tip of nose to neck 9½ in.; girth between eyes and ears, 14 in.; girth of snout, 7½ in.; width between eyes, 2½ in. Neck—length from joining on of head to shoulders, 9 in.; girth round neck, 13½ in. Back—from neck to base of tail, 21 in.; length of tail, 17 in. (his tail was rather short, but remarkably fine). Intermediate points—length of loin from junction of last rib to hip bone 8 in.; length from hip bone to socket of thigh joint 5 in. Fore-leg—from base of the middle nail to fetlock joint 2 in.; from fetlock joint to elbow joint 12½ in.; thickness of fore-leg below elbow 6 in. Hind-leg—from hock to stifle joint 9½ in.; from stifle to top of hip bone 12 in. girth of ham part of thigh 14 in.; thickness of second thigh below stifle, 8½ in. Body—girth round depth of chest, 26½ in.; girth round loins, 17½ in. Weight, as already stated, 54lb. It would, I think, be of no little interest should you be able to give us similar details concerning the actual winner of this year's Waterloo Cup.—JOHNNY LONGTAIL.

GRASSHOPPER AND COCKCHAFER FISHING FOR MAHSEER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I do not think it is generally known how deadly the natural fly is in certain localities for mahseer. Among the lower Himdayas flights of locusts are not at all uncommon. At Mussoorie, Bhim Tal and other places I have seen straggling swarms of these destructive insects drifting across the deep valleys like clouds of autumn leaves. Like the birds and animals, the fish, too, have discovered that locusts are excellent eating, and in certain places mahseer will take the gigantic grasshoppers with avidity. In the Kumaon lakes excellent bags have at times been made with the live locust, the big insects being attached to the hook by the stout skin of the shoulders and cast with a light, single-handled trout rod. Knowing the predilection of mahseer for locusts, I studied the feeding of these omnivorous Eastern carp, and soon found that certain other smaller insects were also favorite articles of food—grasshoppers were always readily taken in the daytime and cockchafers at dusk. Both these latter insects possessed a great advantage over the locust, in that they were always to be had and, therefore, unlike the occasionally fleeting locusts, never out of season. Grasshoppers and cockchafers are, moreover, much more convenient as regards size for casting with a light rod. The cockchafer especially, with its hard, tough carapace, holds on to the hook well, and can be cast easily to a considerable distance without any extraordinary care being necessary. I used a pair of small-eyed snuck hooks whipped back to back, and found this arrangement very

satisfactory both for grasshoppers and cockchafers. When fishing crystal clear water with the live grasshopper, it becomes necessary to use extraordinarily fine gut. I used to get 4X drawn gut out from England specially for this work. Mahseer of 2lb. and over would very frequently smash up my delicate gear, for they are very powerful fish, as strong as, or even stronger than, a well-conditioned trout of similar weight. Mahseer very seldom jump, but are extraordinarily prompt in taking advantage of any weeds or snags that chance to be in their vicinity. Mahseer display very considerable intelligence and discrimination. I have often tested their cunning by collecting a shoal of 1lb. to 2lb. fish by judicious feeding. This is easily done in some of the hill lakes by throwing in handfuls of paste pellets. Having collected the fish, I used to get my fly rod ready, while a native boy held a handful of dough pellets. Then, having buried a small sneck hook in a pea of paste, I would make my cast at the same moment that the boy threw in his handful of pellets. Although my gut was 4X drawn, and hook pellet and ground bait all fell together into the water, I used never to hook a fish unless the water was strongly rippled and the sun behind a cloud. Every morsel of paste, except the one containing the hook, would be gulped down, but the dangerous morsel would be left to sink untouched to the bottom. It must be remembered that all the time the mahseer were not a bit shy; there they were swimming round and round, eager to be fed, and not in the least alarmed at a couple of human beings standing up in full view only 6yds. or 7yds. off. Directly the sun has set and dusk approaches, the fisherman's task becomes easier. I always found the cockchafer fishing in the gloaming far more productive than grasshopper fishing during the day.—FLOR-DE-LYS.

A COLONY OF OWLS.

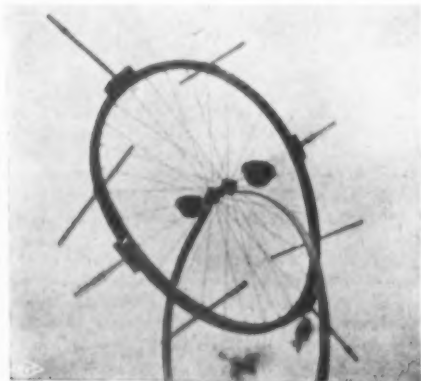
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—May I be allowed a little space in your most interesting paper to tell your numerous lovers of birds something that I think, in these sad days of bird destruction, is remarkable—viz., a colony of owls in Sussex. A short time ago I visited the little hamlet of St. Botolphs, near Shoreham. In the tower of its quaint old church, standing next to a large farm, is a colony of short-eared owls. It is a charming sight to stand close by concealed in an old outhouse and watch these graceful birds on a moonlight night seeking their food of mice, etc. It is delightful for bird-lovers to know that two old ladies who reside in a little cottage close by the church most carefully guard these owls, and were to the collector who, gun in hand, should attempt an assault on them. Surely this shows what can be done even in these days for our feathered friends. It is a useless errand, therefore, for anyone to go in search of these birds, so would-be collectors can stay at home.—HENRY J. MOXON, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, Hove, Sussex.

TOMTITS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—A few years ago a pair of great tits built their nest in a hollow, cast-iron gatepost on the roadside opposite my house. The entrance was through the bolt-slot, only $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide by $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. high. The male bird squeezed through with some difficulty. Every spring since then they have explored the interior, but not nested again therein. I have recently extracted the remains of the nest with a wire twisted corkscrew fashion at the end, and I found the top of the nest to be about 22in. below the entrance slot, and about 1ft. above the bottom of the cavity. It is incomprehensible to me how the young birds could fly upwards in a space only $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter. In 1906 and 1907 great tits built in Egyptian "chatties" hung in the top of a wirework rose bower in my garden, and they flew in and out to feed their young brood, undeterred by the family sitting below them at tea. My gardener has noticed, in the early mornings, a bird fly out of an empty cocoanut-shell attached to an arch in the kitchen garden, so I conclude that it appreciates the shelter. Wishing to ascertain whether other birds will do likewise, I have provided several friends with cocoanuts fitted with a perch inside and an entrance at each end. While feasting on the nut the tits may perhaps learn to appreciate the "dormitory." A source of much amusement is a "tomtit's gymnasium," consisting of an old bicycle wheel and axle, mounted in a loop frame, with four rods radiating from the rim, to each of which a crossbar is fixed parallel with the axle. On each crossbar an empty cotton bobbin is



fastened, and the bobbin is encircled loosely by a brass wire terminating in a hook. Nuts are put on the hooks. The wheel is balanced by winding narrow strips of sheet lead round the rim on the lighter side, or by stuffing fat or margarine into the rim. The tits are the only birds which have the courage to

remain on the wheel when it begins to revolve; they hang on even if it makes a complete revolution. When snow is on the ground during hard continuous frosts the scene is very lively. The wheel is in front of the dining-room window, so that the performance is entertaining during meals.—THOMAS FEWSTER WILKINSON, Bartle Garth, Reepham by Lincoln.

THE FLAIL.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I beg to enclose a photograph taken near Algorta, Bilbao, Spain, of a Basque farmer with his flail. The Basque implement differs from ours in having a short handle and a long beater. It is used only for threshing beans, the wheat being struck on the edge of a stone. The Basque name for the flail is idaurra (id-ow-rah) in Spain, and idarbur (id-ar-boor) in the French Basque provinces. Another name is chipitea, which is reminiscent of the Tuscany (Italian) term chiercia, the tools in both countries being alike, and consisting of two grooved sticks united by a dumb-bell tie. This description is characteristic of one of the Irish flails also; but, except in County Clare, where the form is identical with that of the Basque implement, the tool is (like all other British flails) made up of a long handle and a shorter beater.—T. M. ALISON, M.D.



AN OUTPOST OF THE EMPIRE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph may interest your readers. It represents an out-station of British administration in that portion of the African Continent which has most recently been brought under our control—viz., North-Eastern Rhodesia. Only one official resides there, and his nearest neighbours are respectively 76 miles away on the one side, and 116 miles on the other. Far from being dissatisfied with his lot, the occupier of the "boma" (official residence) at Nawalia, when I passed through it in the autumn of 1907, was fervently praying that he would not be transferred for another two years, his solitude being more than compensated for by the numbers of elephant, rhino and smaller game that have made their home in this neighbourhood. I might mention that when he goes home on leave he has a tramp to the railhead at Broken Hill of somewhat over 400 miles by the nearest forest path. The furthest building seen in the photograph is his own dwelling, while the one-roomed round hut on the right is a spare house seldom occupied.—A. J. BOGER.



WATER-BEETLES IN WINTER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Can you or any of your readers kindly give me any light on what is rather a mystery to me? Lately, having occasion to dig in the neighbourhood of a mill-pond, I, fed by several springs rising out of the ground in its immediate neighbourhood, I came across a little collection of big water-beetles, apparently buried in the ground. I am no coleopterist or else I should probably not have to be asking information on what may be a very well-known point in the life history of these insects. I should be much obliged if any of your correspondents could tell me what the beetles were doing there. They were either dytiscus or hydrophilus, I am not quite sure which, and I have understood, on what I have been taught to consider a good authority, that these water-beetles hibernate—that is to say, go into a trance during the winter, buried in the ground. This they may have been doing in the instance I am mentioning, only if it were so, it was the strangest form of hibernation trance that I have ever seen. Most animals when roused from the trance are as if still more than half asleep, and seem to get their wits together very slowly. But with these beetles their state was quite different. They seemed to have all their faculties about them immediately, for no sooner were they dislodged by the digging than they made their way with the greatest celerity to the spot where the nearest little spring came bubbling out of the ground, and half-tumbling and half-scrambling till they got there, dived down its mouth and went out of sight. This is very different from the lethargy, both of intelligence and muscle, which most hibernating creatures show when first accidentally aroused. It may be, of course, that they were not hibernating at all—there had been a slight frost for a night or two before their disturbance and no frost in the day—but if they were not hibernating why were they not in the ponds? Some of the notonecta kind I find in the ponds at this winter season, but neither hydrophilus nor dytiscus. Is it possible that they pass the winter in a semi-hibernation, or that they live quite an active, although a subterranean, life in the springs and their reservoirs?—H. G. H.